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Old Testament History

FOR

NATIONAL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

WITH A MAP OF THE HOLY LAND

BY

THE REV. G. F. MACLEAR, D.D.,

WARDEN OF ST AUGUSTINE'S, CANTERBURY, AND
LATE HEAD MASTER OF KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL, LONDON

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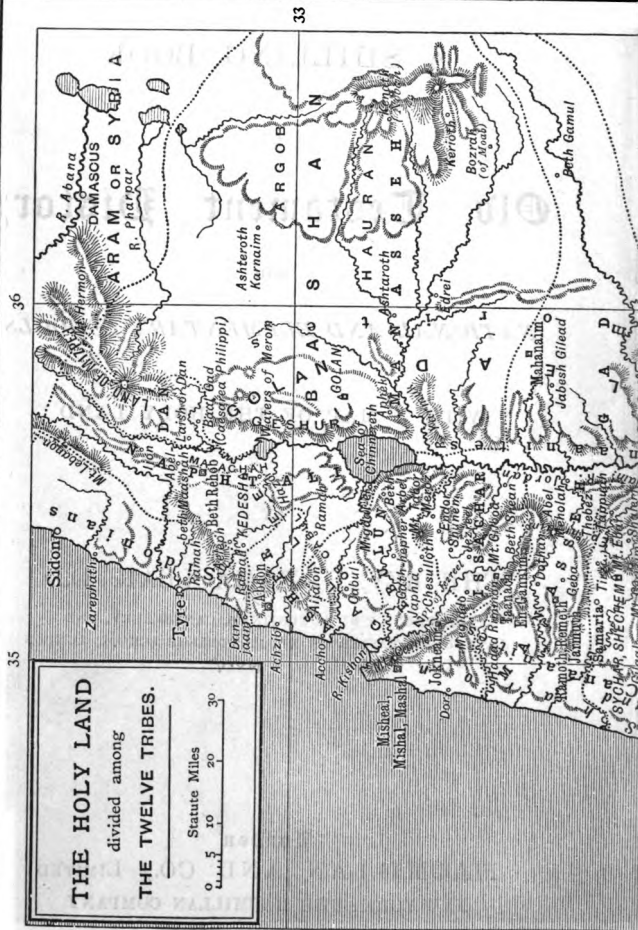
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Numerical reference
to
Places in Benjamin.

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2. Gibeon
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8. Gibeath (of Saul)

The six Cities of Refuge, as HEBRON
The Levitical Towns as Beth Rehob
Those in Benjamin, Judah and Simeon,
allotted to the Priests, as Libnah



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allotted to the Priests, as **Libnah** **Δ**

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BOOK I.

From the Creation to the Dispersion of Mankind.

CHAPTER I.

1. **The Creation.** *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* With these simple words begins the History contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, teaching us that the world did not exist from all eternity, or, as some have thought, owe its origin to Chance, but was called into existence by the will of an All-Mighty Creator. The Creation of the world took place in six *days*, or *periods of time*. On the *first day* light was created, and divided from the darkness; on the *second* the firmament, or atmosphere encircling the globe; on the *third*, the water and the land were separated, and the surface of the earth was covered with vegetation, with *the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after its kind*. On the *fourth*, the sun, moon, and stars were bidden to *give light upon the earth, and to be for signs and seasons, and for days and years*. On the *fifth*, the waters brought forth the various tribes of fish after their kind, and the *winged fowl* flew in the air. On the *sixth day* land animals, *cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth* appeared, and each and all were pronounced by God to be *very good*.

2. **The Creation of Man.** But the work of Creation was not yet complete. A being higher than any yet created was to appear. Accordingly, *God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over every living thing, and over all the earth; over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* So the Lord God *formed Man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Man became a living soul.* Then having seen that all things He had made were *very good*, God ended His work, and rested on the *Seventh Day*, hallowing it as a Day of Rest for man.

3. **Adam and Eve.** For the abode of the first man, **ADAM**, the Almighty planted a garden in the region of the East, where now is the high table-land of the modern Armenia. It was watered by four streams, of which two were the Tigris and Euphrates. The situation of the others, Pison and Gihon, is not known. But here, in a spot supplied with everything that was pleasant to the eyes and good for food, the first man's work commenced, and he was charged to *dress and keep* the garden, which the Lord had made. Nor amidst everything to

please his senses and supply material for his thoughts was he left alone. A being, *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*, was created a *helpmeet for him*. The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and taking one of his ribs He made thereof a woman, and brought her unto him, and Eve, *the mother of all flesh*, was united to him in holy bonds, which He, who thus instituted them in Paradise, afterwards adorned and beautified with His own presence and first miracle at Cana of Galilee (Jn. ii. 1; Eph. v. 23—33).

4. **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.** Of the life of the first human pair in Paradise we are told very little. Besides the charge to dress and keep the fair enclosure in which they had been placed, they received but one command. Of the fruit of every tree in the garden they might freely eat, save the fruit of one in the midst of the Garden, and called *the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Of the fruit of this tree the Almighty said to them, *Ye shall not eat, for in the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die*. How long our first parents were faithful and obedient to this command we are not told. But whether the period was long or short, certain it is that it came to an end.

5. **The Temptation.** The Creation of man had been watched by a Being of infinite subtilty and malignity, the Enemy of God and of all goodness. In Genesis he is called the Serpent, in other places he is styled Satan, *i. e. the Enemy*, and the Devil, *i. e. the Slanderer*. He now approached the woman and enquired, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* To this Eve replied that they might eat of the fruit of every tree save one, *that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*, for on the day they ate of that they would surely die. Thereupon the Tempter declared that death would not follow the eating of this fruit, nay, that the Almighty knew that in the day they ate thereof, her eyes and those of her husband would be opened, and they would *become as gods, knowing good and evil*.

6. **The Fall.** Thus he threw a dark shadow over the goodness and love of God, and affirmed that, in mere envy, He had denounced a penalty He could not inflict. In an evil hour Eve listened to his voice, and seeing *that the Tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise*, she took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her and he did eat. Then the wicked counsels of the Tempter were accomplished. Through want of faith in God's word, through a vain desire to become gods unto themselves, our first parents were beguiled into sin, *and when their*

eyes were opened, instead of greater happiness, they felt a hitherto unknown sense of shame and degradation and unmeetness for God's presence.

7. **The first Promise of a Saviour.** But though they thus yielded to the arts of a malignant Tempter, they were not wholly given up to his power. God now interfered between them and their Enemy. For them, indeed, it remained to taste of the bitter fruits of their disobedience and mistrust. Eve was told that sorrow and pain must henceforth be the condition of her life; *in sorrow should she bring forth children, her desire should be to her husband, and he should rule over her.* Adam was told that with himself nature too must undergo a change; *thorns and thistles* must grow upon the face of the earth, toil must be the price of his existence, and his end the silence of the grave, *for dust he was, and unto dust he must return.* But the triumph of the Tempter was not to be complete. *Utterly cursed was he above all cattle, and over every beast of the field, and the very creature whom he had sought to conquer, should in the end prove his conqueror. I will put enmity,* said the Almighty to him, *between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* In these words we trace the *first Promise* of a future Deliverer of the human race. With this Sacred History finds its starting-point, and the Old Testament becomes a true introduction to the New, because it reveals the several steps whereby the Divine Wisdom provided for the fulfilment of this promise, for the coming of One, *in whom the Father counselled before the worlds* to redeem mankind, and to gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth (Eph. i. 10; Phil. ii. 9, 10).

CHAPTER II.

1. **Adam leaves Eden.** Though thus assured of the coming of a Saviour, the first man, as a fallen being, could not remain in the region, which had been the scene of his trial and his failure. Lest he should take of the fruit of another tree that grew in the midst of the Garden, *the Tree of Life*, and eat, and live for ever, he was sent forth from Eden, at the east of which were stationed cherubim, or angels, while a *flaming sword, which turned every way*, guarded the approach to the Tree of Life.

2. **Cain and Abel.** Thus driven forth from Eden, Adam and Eve in due time became the parents of two sons, **CAIN** (*gotten or acquired*), and **ABEL** (*breath, transitoriness*). From early

years the two brothers were very different in their characters, and at length a fatal quarrel broke out between them. One day they both brought offerings to the Lord; Cain, of the fruit of the ground, Abel, of the best that he had, even the firstlings of his flock. The offering of Abel was accepted, that of Cain rejected. This roused Cain's jealousy, and he became his brother's murderer. For this he was condemned by the Almighty to be driven forth for ever from the region of Eden, and removed into the land of Nod (*Exile*), where he became the ancestor of numerous descendants.

3. **Cain's Posterity.** The heads of these are mentioned to the sixth generation under the names of ENOCH, IRAD, MEHUJEL, METHUSHEL, and LAMECH. In the land of Nod Cain built the earliest city of which we have any record, and called it *Enoch*, after the name of his eldest son. The fourth after him, Lamech was the first to take more than one wife, and of his three sons JABAL first taught the art of tent-making, JUBAL the use of musical instruments, and TUBAL-CAIN the art of working in metals.

4. **Seth's Descendants.** Meanwhile with another son Seth (*substituted*), who had been given to Adam in place of Abel, a line began very different from that of Cain. The heads of this family are told us to the tenth generation under the names of SETH, ENOS, CAINAN, MAHALALEEL, JARED, ENOCH, METHUSELAH, LAMECH, NOAH. One of the most eminent of the descendants of Seth was ENOCH, the son of Jared, the *seventh from Adam* (Jude 14). All his life long he walked by faith and in communion with the Most High, and at length one day he vanished from amongst his fellow-men. *He was not*, for the God, whom he served, *took him* to Himself, and translated him to the unseen world, without undergoing death.

5. **The Wickedness of Men.** In this early period of the world human life was prolonged to a great length. Adam attained to the age of 930 years, Methuselah to that of 969, the others nearly as long. But though men lived to such a great age they did not walk in the paths of righteousness. Their wickedness became worse and worse, till at length *the earth was filled with violence, and all men corrupted their way upon it.* Even many in the righteous line of Seth fell away, and the sin of man was great, and *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil, and that continually.*

6. **The Flood denounced.** In this awful crisis one man alone found favour with God, NOAH (*rest or comfort*), the son of Lamech. When he was 500 years old, he became the father of three sons, SHEM, HAM and JAPHETH. Like Enoch he was a

righteous and perfect man in his generation, and to him, when the cup of the world's iniquity was full, the Almighty revealed His intention to bring an awful judgment upon the world. Behold I, even I, said God, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. From this terrible judgment Noah and his family alone were to be preserved, and he was told to construct an Ark, into which, when completed, he was to repair with his wife, his three sons and their wives, and also two of every species of beasts and birds accounted "unclean" or unfit for sacrifice, and seven of every species accounted "clean." The ark was to be made of gopher-wood, probably cypress, and was to be overlaid within and without with pitch or bitumen. In length it was to be 300 cubits, in breadth 50, in depth 30. But though the Flood was thus announced by the mouth of God Himself as certain to come to pass, the doom itself was deferred for upwards of 120 years.

7. The Judgment inflicted. *During this period, according to all that God commanded Noah, so did he. Though the things, of which he was warned, were yet not seen (Heb. xi. 7), nay, must have seemed to many very unlikely, he yet persevered in warning his fellowmen of what was to come. But his warnings fell on unheeding ears. The men of his generation set at nought all his counsel, and mocked at his reproofs. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage (Mtt. xxiv. 38; Lk. xvii. 26, 27) as before. At length the day of Doom came. On the 17th day of the second month of the six hundredth year of Noah's life he and his family entered the Ark, and the Lord shut them in. Then, after a solemn pause, the flood began. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain descended till the waters covered the highest hills, and all flesh wherein was the breath of life died, of fowl, of cattle, of wild beast, and of every creeping thing, which creepeth upon the earth, and every man, save Noah only and they that were with him in the Ark. For 150 days the waters prevailed, till at length on the 17th day of the 7th month the Ark rested on one of the peaks of Ararat. From this time the waters gradually decreased, till the first day of the 10th month, when the tops of the mountains having begun to appear, Noah sent forth a raven, which did not come back to the Ark. A week afterwards he sent forth a dove, to see if the waters were abated from the lower and more level country. But the dove, finding no rest for the sole of her foot, returned. Again he waited seven*

days, and once more sent her forth. This time she came back with a *fresh olive-leaf pluckt off in her mouth*, a sign that the waters had still further subsided. After another seven days Noah sent her forth for the third time, when she did not return, having found on the earth *a rest for the sole of her foot*. Then he knew that the awful Judgment was indeed over, and at the Divine command left the Ark, and set foot on the dry land.

CHAPTER III.

1. **The Covenant of the Rainbow.** The first act of Noah on leaving the Ark was to build an altar and offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord of *every clean beast and of every clean fowl*. His sacrifice was accepted, and he and his sons were solemnly assured that all flesh should never again be cut off by the waters of a flood, but that *while the earth remained, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night should not cease*. Of this Promise on the part of the Most High the Rainbow was the seal and pledge, assuring man that he need not dread another terrible and universal Judgment like that with which the earth had been so lately visited. Again too, men were bidden to be *fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*, and while allowed to eat of animal food were solemnly warned of the sacredness of human life, whoso *shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed*.

2. **Noah's Prophecy.** The region, where the Ark had rested, being situated between the Black and Caspian Seas on the North, and the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea on the South, formed a convenient centre, whence the sons of Noah might overspread the whole earth. But before they set out for this purpose, an unseemly incident occurred, which pointed to their future destinies. Noah began to till the ground, and planted a vineyard, and not knowing its properties as it has been thought, drank of the wine to excess, and lay exposed in his tent. While he was in this condition, Ham, his youngest son, mocked him, but Shem and Japheth, with more filial feeling, averting their eyes covered their father with a garment. Awaking from his slumber, Noah became aware of what his youngest son had done, and justly angry, uttered prophetic words of blessing and cursing. CANAAN, the fourth son of Ham, and probably a partaker in his father's sin, he declared should ever be a slave to his brethren, while SHEM should be the chosen one of Jehovah, and JAPHETH, when *multiplied and enlarged, should dwell in his tents, and partake of his blessing*.

3. **The Building of Babel.** Thus forewarned of what should happen to them hereafter, the sons of Noah went forth, and took up their abode for some time on the rich plain of Shinar, between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Here their descendants began to form a great community, but disobeying the Divine command to disperse themselves abroad and replenish the whole earth, resolved to make a City and a huge Tower, *whose top might reach unto heaven*. But this the Almighty would not permit, and whereas before they had all one language, He now confounded it, so that they could not understand each other's words. Thus unable to continue building their City Tower, which was henceforth called **BABEL** (*Confusion*), they were scattered abroad over the earth, according to the eternal designs of Him, *Who had determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of the habitation of the sons of men* (Acts xvii. 26).

(4) **Table of Noah's Descendants.** At this point the Sacred Narrative presents to us a Genealogical Table, in which the names of the several nations descended from Noah are preserved, and we learn how they were distributed over the earth. From this Table it appears that

(i) The descendants of **JAPHETH** (*enlargement*), after leaving the original cradle of the human race, occupied chiefly *the isles of the Gentiles*, or the coast-lands of the Mediterranean Sea in Asia Minor and Europe, and thence spread chiefly in a northerly direction over the entire European Continent, and a great portion of Asia. Thus **GOMER** was the ancestor of the Cymmerians or Cimbri, **MAGOG** of the Scythians, **MADAI** of the Medes, **JAVAN** of the Ionians and Greek race, **TUBAL** and **MESECH** of the Tibareni and Moschi, two Colchian tribes, and **TIRAS** of the Thracians.

(ii) The descendants of **HAM** (*heat*) proceeded in a southerly direction, and occupied the whole of Africa, and the Southern peninsulas of Asia, India, and Arabia. Of his four sons **CUSH** extended his settlements from Babylonia to Ethiopia, **MIZRAIM** colonized Egypt, **PHUT** Libya, and **CANAAN** the land called by his name.

(iii) The descendants of **SHEM** established themselves in Central Asia, and thence extended in an easterly and westerly direction, **ARAM** colonizing the country afterwards known as Syria, **LUD** Lydia, **ARPHAXAD** Chaldaea, **ASSHUR** part of Assyria, **ELAM** Persia, **JOKTAN** a portion of the Arabian peninsula (Gen. x. 1—26).

CHAPTER IV.

(1) Nimrod. Sacred History does not tell us much concerning the immediate descendants of Noah. The region of Shinar continued to gather round it a large number of the early inhabitants of the world, and here arose one of the earliest of the great empires of the earth. It was founded by Nimrod, a son of Cush, and grandson of Ham. Of great powers and gigantic stature, he first became famous by his exploits as a *mighty hunter*. In course of time he joined to these exploits the conquest of men, and founded a great empire on the plains of Shinar, the chief towns of which were Babel, Erech (*Edessa*), Accad (*Nisibis*), and Calneh (*Ctesiphon*). Thence he pushed forward his conquests along the course of the Tigris into Assyria, amongst the descendants of Shem, where he founded a second group of cities, Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen.

2. Spread of Idolatry. Whether the worship of false gods was introduced, as some have supposed, by this great hero of the ancient world or not, certain it is that men now became more and more addicted to it. Though the knowledge of the One true God and of His gracious promise of Redemption was handed down by tradition, and though *His Eternal Power and Godhead* were clearly to be discerned in the works of Creation (Rom. i. 19, 20), yet men *glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful*. They began to *worship the creature rather than the Creator*, and the sun, moon, and stars, the principle of fire, even the inferior animals, and departed heroes, were regarded with veneration, and as men became more idolatrous, so they became more and more cruel, tyrannical, and licentious.

3. The Patriarch Job. One of the earliest allusions to this form of idolatry occurs in the Book of Job (chap. xxxi. 26—28). The age and the writer of this Book are alike unknown. Some ascribe it to Job himself, others to Moses, others to some writer who lived at a still later period. As, however, the events in the life of this Patriarch have been thought by many to have occurred at a period not far removed from that which we have now reached, it may be well to speak of them here. Job, then, was an eminent Eastern chief, dwelling in very early times in the land of Uz, probably Arabia Deserta, or, as some suppose, Mesopotamia. Greatest among the sons of the East, and endowed with all the riches of his age, he ruled piously and wisely over a happy and numerous household, having seven sons and three daughters. With bounteous hand he distributed to the wants of the poor, so that whenever *the ear heard him then it blessed him, when the eye saw him it gave witness unto him, and*

the Lord Himself declared him to be *without his like in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil.*

4. **Job's Trials.** But in the midst of all this happiness he was suddenly struck with the heaviest misfortunes. To put his faith to the most certain test, the Enemy of man was permitted to cast him down, and try him with the most grievous afflictions. Blow after blow descended upon him. From being the lord of a numerous household he suddenly was bereft of all his children, for the storm of the desert swept over the house where his sons and daughters were assembled, and crushed them all beneath its ruins. From being one of the richest of his time he suddenly became a beggar, for a thunderbolt fell and struck down all his sheep, while his camels were carried off by a band of Chaldæan robbers, and his oxen and asses by a horde of Sabæans. Moreover he was himself smitten with an awful malady. The leprosy of the East set its terrible mark upon him, making him an object loathsome to behold. Smitten with sores *from the sole of his foot even unto his crown*, he sat apart, forsaken by his friends, and even by his wife. But amidst these fearful trials his faith was not shaken. When the tidings reached him of the fate of his household he said, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the Name of the Lord.* When his wife, utterly unable to bear up, bade him curse his Maker, and die, he answered, *What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

5. **Job's Friends.** Before long the news of his afflictions was noised abroad, and three of his old friends, Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar of Naamath came to *mourn with him, and to comfort him.* In their presence Job at length broke forth into terrible words, and *cursed the day of his birth.* His friends did not calm with their sympathy the tempest of his soul, but rather heightened his griefs by ascribing his trials to some sin committed either by himself or his children. This Job strove at great length to refute, and denied that great suffering is always a proof of great guilt, while ELIHU, another and a younger friend of the patriarch, tried to moderate between them, declaring that afflictions, even when not the direct consequences of sin, were meant for good, and reproving his friend for justifying himself rather than the Almighty. At length the Lord Himself, from the midst of a whirlwind, in grand and sublime words, silenced the murmurs of His servant, bidding him reflect on the marvels of creation, and learn how useless it is for a created being to contend with his Creator. Thereupon Job confessed his error and supplicated the Divine

pardon. His prayer was heard, and his three friends were severely reprov'd for their uncharitable reflections on the origin of his misfortunes. Moreover, He who had suffered him to be sorely tried, now showered down upon him once more the riches of His goodness, restored him to still greater prosperity than he had ever enjoyed before, and made him the father of seven sons and three daughters, celebrated for their beauty above all the maidens of the East, and named Jemima, Kezia, and Kerenhappuch. Job survived his altered fortunes upwards of 140 years, and then having seen his children to the fourth generation, died in a good old age, an instructive example of integrity (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20), and of patience under the most trying calamities (Jas. v. 11).

BOOK II.

The Patriarchal Age.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Degeneracy of Mankind.** There will always, perhaps, be a doubt as to the exact period after the Flood when Job lived, but there can be no doubt the men of the age succeeding that event were not constant and faithful to the One true God. Within 10 generations mankind had again become forgetful of their Maker, and corrupted their way upon the earth. It was not now, however, the purpose of the Almighty to visit their sins with a universal judgment. In His counsels of Mercy He determined to select a man, and through him a family and a nation to be His witnesses upon the earth; to place this nation under special laws, and out of it to bring in *the fulness of time* (Gal. iv. 4) the promised Saviour of the human race.

2. **The Call of Abraham.** The man chosen by the Almighty to be the ancestor of this nation was ABRAHAM, or, as he was first called, Abram, the son of Terah, who lived, in the eighth generation from Shem, at *Ur of the Chaldees*. Besides Abram Terah had two other sons, Nahor and Haran, but Abram, though mentioned first, was probably the youngest. From Ur, probably the modern *Orfah* in upper Mesopotamia, Terah removed, and travelling in a southerly direction arrived at Haran or Charran, where he stayed, and afterwards died at the age of 205. Upon this a still more distinct command bade Abram leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and go to a land which God would show him. There said the Almighty, *I will make of thee a great nation, and make thy name great, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* Painful as it must have been to flesh and blood

to tear himself away from his family and his people, Abram did not refuse to follow the Hand which promised him guidance and protection. At the age of 75, with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all that he possessed, he left Haran, and crossing the Euphrates commenced his journey southward and westward towards the *Land of Promise*.

3. *His Arrival in Palestine.* Striking across the great Syrian desert he kept on his southward course, and having crossed the Jordan *passed through the land* till he came to Shechem, between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. Here he halted, and was told that he had reached the goal of his long journey. *This land*, said God, *I will give unto thy seed*, and at Shechem Abram built his first altar to the Lord in the Land of Promise. Thence he afterwards removed to the country east of Bethel, or, as it was then called, Luz, and here he erected his second altar to the Lord. Here he learned that, though the heir of mighty promises, he was not to be without his share of trials. The first that befell him was a grievous famine, in consequence of which he resolved to go down into Egypt, then, as always, the fertile granary of the neighbouring nations. As he drew near the land of the mighty Pharaohs, he was afraid lest the beauty of Sarai might expose her to danger from the Egyptians, and persuaded her to say she was his sister. What he feared came to pass. The princes of Egypt *beheld the woman that she was fair*, and told Pharaoh, who took her into his palace, and sent presents of cattle and sheep to her supposed brother. But *the Lord plagued Pharaoh with great plagues*, till finding out the true relation between her and Abram, the monarch sent her back to her husband with a strong rebuke for the deception he had practised.

4. *Lot's Choice.* How long Abram stayed in Egypt after this we are not told, but at length, his wealth in cattle and gold and silver much increased, he returned to Palestine, and took up his abode once more between Bethel and Ai. Hitherto his nephew Lot had been his companion in all his wanderings, but now, owing to the great increase of their flocks and herds, a quarrel arose between their herdsmen, and it was plain that they must part. Always generous and noble Abram bade his nephew take the first choice, and select wherever he pleased a place for his new abode. From the high table-land, where they were encamped, Lot looked down upon the well-watered plain south of the Jordan, then *a very garden of the Lord like the land of Egypt*, they had so lately left. Though the wickedness of the inhabitants was

very great, Lot chose it for his abode, while Abram, though left alone in Canaan, was once more assured by God that all the land which he beheld should be given to his seed, which should be as numerous as the sand on the sea-shore.

5. **The Battle of the Kings.** Thus encouraged, Abram removed his tent, and travelling southward took up his abode under the oak of Mamre, an Amorite prince, near Hebron, or, as it was then called, Kirjath-Arba. Here as in every other place he built an altar to the Lord, and one day received unexpected news respecting Lot. In the tropical valley of the Jordan were five cities, SODOM, GOMORRAH, ADMAH, ZEBOIIM, and BELAH. The chiefs ruling over them had for 12 years been subject to a powerful king of Elam or Mesopotamia, named CHEDORLAOMER. But they now united to throw off his yoke. Thereupon the king of Elam, aided by three other chiefs, proceeded to make war against them, and having smitten the countries east of the Jordan, and in the south of Mount Seir, he met the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah in pitched battle in the vale of Siddim, utterly routed them, and with much spoil commenced his return northwards. It was the news of this battle and its issue that Abram now heard. Without losing a moment, he instantly armed his 318 *trained servants*, and aided by his friend the Amorite chief Mamre and his brothers Eschol and Aner, arose and pursued the invaders by night as far as Laish, far up in the northern mountains. Here he fell upon them suddenly, smote them, and chased them to Hobah on the left of Damascus.

6. **Melchizedek.** Thence with the recovered captives, amongst whom was Lot, he returned and at the King's Dale, not far from Hebron, was met by the king of Sodom accompanied by a mysterious personage, named MELCHIZEDEK, a king of Salem, an eminent Canaanitish prince, who had maintained the worship of the true God, and who, as was not unusual in these days, was at once king and priest (See Hebrews, vii. 1—21; Ps. cx. 4). How high was his dignity is plain from the fact that to him the patriarch Abram reverently gave tithes of all that he had taken in his late expedition, and received his solemn blessing. Before they parted, the king of Sodom pressed Abram to take a portion of the spoil as his reward. This, however, the other would not do. For himself he would take nothing, *from a thread to a shoelatchet*, and only asked for a portion of the spoil for his friends Mamre, Eschol, and Aner, and then returned to the shade of the oak near Hebron.

CHAPTER II.

1. **The Covenant-sacrifice.** But though Abram had been thus victorious, and had gotten him honours before the chiefs of the land in which he was a stranger, the promise of the mighty nation destined to spring from his loins seemed as far off as ever. No son had the patriarch, and when the Almighty appeared to him again in vision, he mournfully complained that *one born in his house*, probably Eliezer of Damascus, *would be his heir*. But the Almighty not only solemnly assured him that a son should be born to him, and that the land, on which he walked, should be the inheritance of his seed, but vouchsafed to him an outward and visible sign to support his faith. He bade the patriarch take a heifer, a ram, and a she-goat, each three years old, together with a turtle-dove and a young pigeon, and after dividing them all, except the birds, lay them piece by piece over against each other. Abram did as the Lord had told him, slew the victims, and laid the divided portions in order. Then from morning till evening he watched them, and from time to time drove away the birds of prey which hovered near. At length the sun went down, and a *horror of great darkness* gathered round him, in the midst of which he discerned a Smoking Furnace and a Burning Lamp passing between the divided victims. Presently a Voice came to him, telling him that his seed should be strangers in a land that was not theirs, that there they should suffer affliction 400 years, and afterwards, *when the cup of the Amorites was full*, come forth and enter on their promised inheritance. Thus assured of the ultimate fulfilment of the Promise, Abram was content to live on in Palestine, and possess his soul in patience.

2. **The Birth of Ishmael.** As yet it had not been expressly said that Abram's wife Sarai should be the mother of the long-promised son. As time went on, therefore, she seems to have thought that this honour was not for her, and persuaded her husband to take her handmaid HAGAR, an Egyptian, as a second wife, that by her he might obtain what was denied herself. Abram did so, and Hagar conceived, but the consequences did not increase his happiness. In a moment of pride Hagar mocked her mistress, and Sarai *dealt hardly with her*, till at length she fled into the southern desert on the way that led to her native land. There, as she halted by a well, an angel of God met her, and bade her return, assuring her that she should give birth to a son, whom she was to call **ISHMAEL** (*whom God hears*). Thereupon Hagar named the fountain Beer-labai-roi

(*the well of the God that appeareth*), and went back to the tents of Sarai, where in course of time she gave birth to Ishmael, when Abram was 86 years old.

3. **The Rite of Circumcision.** Again 13 years rolled away, and still the Promise was not fulfilled. But when hope might almost have ceased to hope, God once more appeared to the patriarch, changed his name from Abram (*a high father*) to ABRAHAM (*the father of a multitude*), and assured him that at length the time was come. But in prospect of the blessing about to be bestowed upon him, he himself and all his seed after him must submit to the rite of Circumcision. At the same time he was told that Sarai, whose name was also now changed to SARAH (*princess*), and no other, was to be the mother of the promised child, whom he was to call ISAAC (*laughter*). Thereupon Abraham was circumcised together with Ishmael, now 13 years of age, and all the male members of his household.

4. **The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.** Shortly afterwards, as the patriarch sat in the heat of the day under the oak near Hebron, he was visited by three mysterious Strangers, whom he entertained with becoming hospitality. The meal over, One of them enquired for his wife, and announced that within the year she would be the mother of a son. On hearing this Sarah laughed, and was reproved by the Speaker, and assured still more confidently of the fulfilment of His word. Then the Three departed eastward towards Sodom. Abraham went with them, and on the way One of them, *the Angel of the Covenant*, informed him why and wherefore they thus proceeded towards the place, where Lot had taken up his abode. The sin of these cities was very great and cried to heaven for vengeance, and judgment was now even at the door. On this Abraham drew near, and with much boldness pleaded for the guilty cities. Perhaps there might be found there at least fifty, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or even ten righteous souls, would the Lord spare the cities for ten's sake? Therefore he was assured that, if only ten righteous souls could be found, the cities should be spared. Meanwhile the other angels had entered Sodom, and were hospitably entertained by Lot, but the inhabitants surrounded his house, and in spite of his entreaties would have offered them personal violence, had they not been suddenly struck with blindness. As the night wore on, the angels warned Lot to gather together every member of his family and flee from the city, which was soon to be destroyed. Lot did as he was advised, but his words were wasted on his sons-in-law and his daughters-in-law, and he seemed unto

them as one that mocked. At day-break the angels, to prevent any further delay, laid hold on him and his wife and his two daughters, and dragging them forth beyond the city, bade them flee to the neighbouring mountains. But Lot was afraid to fly thither, and entreated to be allowed to betake himself to the town of Bela or Zoar (*Little*), at the southern end of the Dead Sea. The sun rose as he entered this City of Refuge, and then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from heaven, and utterly swept away the guilty cities with their inhabitants. Few as were those who survived this awful overthrow, yet one of those few failed to reach the little City of Refuge. In spite of the Angel's warning, Lot's wife lingered, looked back, and caught by the sulphurous tide, was smothered as she stood, and became a *pillar of salt*. As for Lot himself, afraid to dwell even in Zoar, he fled with his two daughters to the eastern mountains, and became the father of two sons, Moab and Ben-Ammi, the ancestors of two powerful nations, the Moabites and Ammonites.

5. *Birth of Isaac.* Shortly after this terrible judgment Abraham left the neighbourhood of Hebron, and journeyed southward towards Gerar between Kadesh and Shur, at that time the principal seat of the Philistines, whose chief was called by the hereditary title Abimelech or *Father-King*. Here also the patriarch from unworthy fear persuaded Sarah to pass for his sister, and exposed her to great peril. But now the time had come for which he had so long waited. Either at Gerar or Beer-sheba Sarah gave birth to the child of promise, who was duly circumcised on the 8th day, and named ISAAC (*laughter*), according to the Divine command. At the feast given when he was weaned, Ishmael mocked the child, and Sarah demanded that he and his mother should be instantly sent away. Much against his will Abraham yielded to her wishes, and Hagar and her son were sent away into the wilderness of Beer-sheba. Soon the water in her skin-bottle being spent, the boy was on the point of dying with thirst, and Hagar, unable to bear the sight of his sufferings, laid him under the desert shrubs, and sat down about a bowshot off. But in her distress an Angel called to her, and bade her not despair. At the same time her eyes were opened to discern a well of water, with which she filled her bottle and gave the lad drink. Ishmael, thus preserved, grew and prospered, dwelt in the desert of Paran, near Mount Sinai, and became renowned for his skill in the use of the bow. Marrying an Egyptian he had twelve sons and one daughter, the ancestors of wild Arab tribes, *their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them.*

6. **The Offering of Isaac.** While Abraham was living in peace and safety near Beer-sheba, the last and greatest trial of his life befell him. He was commanded by God to take *his son, his only son Isaac*, a three days' journey into the land of Moriah and offer him up as a burnt-offering. Terrible as was this trial, the patriarch's faith in God did not falter. He rose up early in the morning, saddled his ass, and with two young men and Isaac his son commenced his journey. On the third day he lifted up his eyes and beheld the spot afar off. Thereupon, leaving the young men behind, he laid the wood upon his son, and with the fire in his hand and a knife ascended the mountain. Marvelling that no victim had been brought, but assured that a Lamb would be provided for a burnt-offering, Isaac accompanied his father to the summit, and submitted without a murmur to be bound and laid upon the altar. But when the father's hand was outstretched to slay him, a Voice from heaven bade him stay. The end for which this mysterious trial had been sent was now gained. He had showed himself willing to give up even his only son at the Divine call. At the same moment the patriarch looked and beheld a ram caught in a thicket by its horns, which he took and offered instead of his son, and named the place *Jehovah-Jireh*, or *the Lord will provide*, while the Almighty again assured him of His blessing and protection.

7. **Death of Sarah.** From this time the patriarch's course was calm and peaceful. Leaving Beer-sheba he once more took up his abode under the oak of Mamre. Here he lost the partner of his eventful life. At the age of 127 (the only instance where the age of a woman is recorded in Scripture) Sarah died, and was laid in *the cave of the field of Machpelah*, a spot now covered by the Mosque of Hebron, which Abraham bought for 400 shekels of silver, *for a possession of a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite*.

8. **Abraham's Death.** Three years afterwards, anxious that Isaac should not marry one belonging to the Canaanitish nations, the patriarch sent the eldest servant of his house, probably Eliezer of Damascus, to the city of his brother Nahor, to procure from thence a wife for him. The servant went, and at a well outside the city of Haran met REBEKAH, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, going forth to draw water. In answer to his enquiries she told him who she was, and having conducted him to her brother Laban, to whom he told the purport of his errand, and all that had befallen his master in Palestine. Rebekah was willing to return with him to the tents of Abraham, and in the course of time became Isaac's

wife. Before long Abraham himself also married a second wife KETURAH, and by her became the father of six children, the ancestors of Arabian and Midianitish tribes. Lest they should dispute the inheritance with Isaac, he presented them with gifts and sent them away into the S.-E. country. Then the Father of the Faithful, being 175 years old, had reached the term of life allotted him. In a good old age and full of years *he was gathered unto his people*, and was laid by Isaac and Ishmael, by the side of his beloved Sarah, in the cave of Machpelah. #

CHAPTER III.

1. *Birth of Esau and Jacob.* For nineteen years after their marriage Isaac and Rebekah were childless, but at length twin sons were born to them, Esau (*hairy*) and Jacob (*he that holds by the heel or the supplanter*). Very different were the characters of the two brothers. Esau was a wild and daring hunter, and revelled in the excitements of the chase; Jacob was a quiet domestic youth, the favourite of his mother. It is in connection with his favourite pursuit that Esau first attracts our notice. As the eldest son he had several peculiar privileges, held superior rank in the family, and succeeded to a double portion of his father's property. On one occasion he returned faint and weary from the chase, and saw his brother preparing some dark red pottage of lentiles, still a favourite dish in the East. Famished and exhausted he longed for the fragrant mess, and implored his brother to let him have it. Seeing his distress, Jacob agreed to give him the pottage if he would sell him his birthright. Unable to control the pangs of hunger, Esau consented. But words would not satisfy Jacob. *Swear unto me*, said he, and Esau swore unto him, and sold his birthright for *one morsel of meat* (Heb. xii. 16), and ate and drank and went his way.

2. *Isaac at Beersheba.* In course of time Isaac journeyed southward to Gerar in consequence of a grievous famine, and like his father before him, persuaded Rebekah to represent herself as his sister, and brought down upon himself a cutting rebuke from Abimelech for the unworthy deception. Here also his wealth increased exceedingly, and besides keeping flocks and herds he began to sow, and reaped within the year an hundred fold. But his riches provoked the hostility of the Philistines, and they stopped up the wells which his father had dug. He was obliged, therefore, to remove to Beersheba, and here God renewed to him the promise made to Abraham, and his differences with the Philistines were brought to a close. But

he was not happy in his family. To his great grief Esau, when 40 years of age, married Judith, the daughter of Beerî, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon, both of the race of the Hittites, and to these he afterwards added Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael.

3. **Jacob's Deception.** We are told little in Scripture of Isaac's life which passed in quiet and peace, nor is any other incident recorded respecting him till *he waxed old, and his eyes grew dim, that he could not see.* Thinking, therefore, that his end was near, he resolved to bestow his solemn blessing on his eldest son. Summoning Esau before him, he bade him go forth to the chase, and bring him savoury venison such as he loved, promising the blessing as his reward. His words were overheard by Rebekah, and she, eager to obtain the blessing for her favourite Jacob, bade him, when his brother was gone, slay two kids, with which she prepared savoury meat. Then arraying him in his brother's garments, and placing the skins of the kids upon his hands and neck, she bade him go into the presence of Isaac, and pass himself off as Esau. Jacob at first was unwilling to adopt her plan, but afterwards went in, and stood before his father in the disguise she had prepared. But Isaac, though old and dimsighted, had his suspicions. When Jacob declared that he had been to the chase and brought of the prey, he enquired how he had found it so quickly, nor did Jacob's ready reply that the Lord had brought it him relieve his mind. He desired him to come near, and felt him; and though he could not understand how *the voice was the voice of Jacob, but the hands were the hands of Esau,* deceived by his solemn assurance that he was none other than Esau, at length bade him present the savoury mess, and ate and drank, and then bestowed upon him in all its fulness the Covenant Blessing. But Jacob had scarcely gone forth from his father's presence, when the true Esau returned from the chase, and presenting himself before Isaac with savoury meat besought his blessing. Very exceedingly did the old man tremble when he heard the voice of his eldest son. But he told him that he had come too late. His brother, *the Supplanter*, had been before him and had obtained the Blessing. With a great and exceeding bitter cry Esau thereupon implored his father for one blessing which perchance might be left, and at length Isaac assured him that *his dwelling should be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above, but he must live by his sword, and serve his brother, till the day when he should gain the dominion, and should shake his brother's yoke from off his neck.* Enraged at the deceit thus practised upon him, Esau resolved to put Jacob to death, and

only deferred killing him till the days of mourning for his father, whose death he deemed near at hand, were ended. But his dark threat became known to Rebekah, and pretending she was afraid Jacob might follow his brother's example and marry a daughter of the Canaanites, persuaded Isaac to consent to his taking a journey to his uncle Laban in Padan-aram. Thence, when a few days were over, and his brother's wrath was appeased, she promised to send for her favourite son again.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Jacob's Vision.** Accordingly Jacob bade farewell to his mother, and set out for the Eastern uplands of Aram, where in place of a few days he was destined to spend many years and to experience many trials. As the sun went down on the first evening of his journey, he reached a valley near the town of Luz, covered with large sheets of bare rock. Taking of the stones that were scattered around he put them for his pillow, and lay down to rest, and as he slept there appeared to him a vision. A Ladder seemed to rise up from the bare ground on which he lay, and the top of it reached even unto heaven, and on it he saw Angels ascending and descending. Moreover from above there came a Voice assuring him of protection, and encouraging him with the hope of return from exile. Jacob awoke trembling and afraid, and rising early, took the stone which had formed his pillow, poured oil upon it, and set it up for a memorial, calling the spot *BETHEL, the House of God*, and promising that if Jehovah would protect him and bring him back, he would not only dedicate the spot to Him, but would give *Him* the tenth of all that he possessed.

2. **Jacob in Padan-aram.** Then he went on his way, and at length reached a well in Padan-aram, round which were gathered three flocks with their shepherds. As he was conversing with them, *RACHEL*, the daughter of his uncle Laban, drew near, and Jacob rolled the stone away from the well's mouth and watered her flocks. He then kissed her, and told her he was Rebekah's son, on which she ran and told her father, who welcomed Jacob to his tent. After a stay of one month, Laban proposed that the wanderer should serve him as a shepherd. To this Jacob consented, and promised to serve him seven years, if he might receive the hand of Rachel in marriage. The seven years passed away, and he who had supplanted his brother Esau, knew what it was to be supplanted himself. On the evening of his marriage Laban gave him his daughter *LEAH* in place of Rachel, nor was the deceit found

out till the following morning, when in answer to Jacob's reproaches, he declared it was not usual to give the younger before the elder daughter, and that if he would have Rachel, he must serve seven years more for her. To these hard conditions Jacob consented, and in the course of time became the father of a numerous family, eleven sons and one daughter. Of these REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, and a daughter DINAH, were born to Leah; DAN and NAPHTALI, to Bilhah, Rachel's maid, whom she gave to Jacob as a secondary wife; GAD and ASHER to Zilpah, Leah's maid; and JOSEPH to Rachel.

3. **Jacob's Return.** Shortly after the birth of Joseph, Jacob, having completed his term of service, proposed to Laban that he should return to his own country. But Laban prevailed upon him to stay with him, and promised as his reward a certain portion of the flocks. Six years longer, therefore, Jacob staid, and became the owner of much cattle. But Laban did not keep his part of the agreement. Again and again he changed the wages of his son-in-law, till at length Jacob could endure it no longer, and resolved to set out for his native land. Accordingly, when his father-in-law was absent at a sheep-shearing, he gathered together all his goods, and with his wives and family crossed the Euphrates, and set his face towards the country east of the Jordan. Three days afterwards news of his flight reached the ears of Laban, and he pursued after him and overtook him in the range of Gilead. Warned by God in a dream not to use any violence towards his son-in-law, he contented himself with reproaching him for his secret flight, and accused him of stealing certain *teraphim* or images, which Rachel had taken and concealed in the camel's furniture. At length it was agreed to come to terms. Stones were gathered and heaped into a mound or Pillar. Beyond this neither was to pass to injure the other's territories, and then Laban returned to Padan-aram.

4. **The Meeting of Jacob and Esau.** Thus relieved from danger, Jacob proceeded on his way westward. As if to welcome him to his native land, the Angels, whom he had seen 20 years before in vision at Bethel, now met him in two hosts, whereupon he named the spot Mahanaim (*two hosts*). But now he thought of his brother Esau, and his doubts how he would receive him filled Jacob with alarm. Sending messengers, therefore, into the country of Seir, he informed his brother of his return, and of the success he had met with in the land of exile. His messengers went, and returned with the alarming news that Esau was approaching at the head of 400 men.

Jacob's distress was very great. Sending a valuable present from his flocks and herds to meet his brother, and dispatching his wives and sons and all that he had across the ford Jabbok, he himself stayed behind to pour forth his whole soul in fervent prayer to God for protection. All through the night even to the break of day he persevered, and wrestled in mysterious conflict with ONE (Hos. xii. 3, 4), whom he knew not, and whose Name he could not prevail upon Him to reveal. But two signs were given him to mark this memorable night. He, with whom he wrestled, *touched the hollow of his thigh, so that it was out of joint*, and also changed his name. Instead of Jacob, *the Supplanter*, he was to be called henceforth *Israel, a Prince of God*, for as a Prince had he power with God and with man, and had prevailed. The site of this eventful conflict Jacob named Peniel (*the face of God*). When the day broke, lo! Esau approached with his 400 men. Thereupon in long procession Jacob went forth to meet him, bowing to the ground seven times till he came near to his brother, who ran to him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. The reconciliation was complete. After mutual converse, Esau agreed to leave to Jacob the land of his inheritance in Palestine, and retired himself to the rugged mountains of Seir, a country henceforth called from him Edom or Idumæa.

5. **Jacob at Shechem.** Thus freed from the sense of danger, Jacob settled for a time at Succoth (*booths*), and thence crossing the Jordan, advanced into the very heart of Palestine, and pitched his tent before the city of Shechem, and like Abraham before him erected an altar to Jehovah. But during his stay here he experienced much trouble and anxiety. One day, on the occasion probably of a festival, DINAH, the daughter of Leah, at this time from 13 to 15 years of age, went out to see the daughters of the land, and was dishonoured by Shechem, a Hittite chieftain. Thereupon, Hamor, the father of Shechem, proposed that he should pay a certain sum by way of reparation to her father and mother for the injury he had done the maiden, and marry her, and that this should be followed by a general intermarriage between the two tribes. To this the brothers of Dinah agreed, but demanded that the people of Shechem should consent to be circumcised. These terms were accepted by the Shechemites, and three days afterwards, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's own brothers, at the head of their households, attacked the city, slew the chiefs and all the males in it, spoiled it of all it contained, and took captive even the women and little children. On hearing of this treacherous act, Jacob was greatly indignant, and filled with fear lest the

people of the land should slay him and all his house, he repaired to Bethel, determined to perform his vow, which he seems almost to have forgotten. Here on the site of his wondrous Vision he erected an altar, which he called El-Bethel, and was again visited by the Almighty, who renewed to him the name of Israel, and assured him of his share in the Covenant-Blessing. During his stay at Bethel, Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under an oak, henceforth known as Allon-bachuth, the *Oak of Tears*. Thence he moved towards Ephrath, the earliest name of Bethlehem, and here a grievous trial befell him. Rachel, his favourite wife, died in giving birth to a son, whom she called Ben-oni, *the son of sorrow*, but whom his father named BENJAMIN, *the son of my right hand*. Over her grave he erected a pillar, and then removed to the oak of Mamre before Hebron, where Isaac died, in the 180th year of his age, and was committed to the tomb of Machpelah by Jacob and Esau.

CHAPTER V.

1. **Joseph's Dreams.** It was while he was living near Hebron that the saddest trial of his life befell Jacob. Of all his sons none was dearer to him than Joseph, the child of his beloved Rachel. In token of his love, he bestowed on him a coat of many colours, which some think showed his intention of transferring to him the right of the first-born. This roused the jealousy of Joseph's brethren, which was still further increased on his telling them of two dreams which he had dreamed. In one he had seemed to see them binding sheaves in the field, and lo! his sheaf rose and stood upright, while their sheaves made obeisance to his: in the other he beheld the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down before him. Even Jacob rebuked his favourite son for his self-exaltation, *though* he observed the saying.

2. **Joseph sold into Egypt.** Before long the brothers took a cruel revenge. Jacob had sent some of his sons to keep a portion of his flocks and herds on the rich pastures near Shechem, and shortly after commanded Joseph to go and see how his brethren fared. From the rising ground at Dothan, where they kept their flocks, they descried the *Dreamer* coming, and resolved to slay him and cast him into a pit, and then report to his father that he had been devoured by wild beasts. Reuben however prevented this wickedness, and they therefore stripped him of his many-coloured coat, and cast him into an empty cistern. But while they sat down to eat, a company of Ishmaelite or Midianite merchants approached, bearing spicery and balm, and going down to Egypt. To these Judah proposed

that he should be sold, and the bargain was concluded for 20 pieces of silver, the usual price of a male slave from 5 to 20 years old. Reuben, who was not present during the cruel transaction, was greatly distressed to find him gone, but the others killed a kid, dipped his coat in the blood, and brought it to Jacob, informing him that thus they had found it. Jacob, supposing that his well-loved son had been slain by wild beasts, put sackcloth upon his loins, and, refusing all consolation, mourned for him many days.

3. *Joseph in Potiphar's House.* On arriving in Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, a *Captain of the Executioners*. Here finding favour with his master, Joseph was speedily placed in a situation of great trust, but this period of happiness was but brief. The wife of Potiphar on one occasion tempted Joseph to commit adultery with her, and when he refused, charged him with the very crime she had tempted him to commit. Thereupon Potiphar, believing her story, cast Joseph into prison. But here also the *Lord was with him*, and gave him such favour with the gaoler that he committed to his care all the other prisoners. Amongst these there soon appeared the *chief of Pharaoh's cupbearers*, and the *chief of his bakers*. These two high officers dreamed each a dream in the prison, which they were unable to interpret. Joseph, by virtue of his prophetic gifts, did so; and announced to the *chief butler* that his dream portended that within 3 days he should be restored to Pharaoh's favour and to his office, while his fellow-prisoner should be hanged on a tree, within the same period. As he had predicted, so it came to pass, but the chief butler, when restored to prosperity, forgot his benefactor and his touching request that he would intercede for him with Pharaoh.

4. *Pharaoh's Dreams.* For two more years Joseph remained in the prison, when one night Pharaoh himself dreamed two strange dreams. In the first, he seemed to stand by the river Nile, and lo! out of it *there came seven well-favoured kine*, and fed in the marsh-grass by the banks. *After them there came up seven lean, ill-favoured kine*, and they ate up the seven fat kine, but when they had done, they were still as ill favoured as at the beginning. The Monarch dreamed again, and beheld *seven ears of corn on one stalk, full and good*, and after them *seven ears, thin and blasted, which devoured the good ears*. Troubled with these dreams he awoke, and called for all the Wise Men of Egypt, but none could interpret them unto him. In this strait, the *chief of the butlers* bethought him of Joseph, and Pharaoh sent for him out of the prison. Hearing the dreams,

he informed the king that they were sent by God as a warning of what He was about to do. The seven good kine and good ears denoted *seven years of plenty*, while the seven lean kine and empty ears denoted *seven years of famine* throughout all Egypt. He advised therefore that without delay Pharaoh should appoint *a man discreet and wise* to lay up in various cities the fifth part of the produce of the land during the years of plenty.

5. **Joseph's Exaltation.** Following this advice, and deeming none so well fitted for the post as Joseph himself, the king arrayed him in royal garments, and invested him with the dignity of an Oriental Vizier. He also changed his name to ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH, *the Revealer of Secrets*, and gave to him in marriage ASENATH, daughter of Potipherah, priest or prince of On. Thus at the age of 30 Joseph was raised to this high position, even next to the sovereign himself, and bought and laid up a fifth part of the corn during the seven years of plenty. During this time, two sons were born to him, MANASSEH (*causing to forget*), and EPHRAIM (*fruitful*). The seven years of famine now drew on, and Joseph sold unto the people the corn stored up. At last, money failing, the people bartered their horses, cattle and flocks for bread, and finally sold themselves and their lands for food to sustain life.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Joseph's Brethren in Egypt.** At an early period during the famine, Joseph's 10 brethren went down into Egypt to buy corn. They were far from recognizing in the great Viceroy, the boy whom 20 years before they had cruelly sold at Dothan. But though Joseph knew *them*, yet he did not reveal himself unto them. He spake roughly unto them, and accused them of being spies, come down to *see the nakedness of the land*, and only allowed them to depart with corn, on Simeon's remaining as a hostage, till they should bring their youngest brother down. Stricken with remorse, they then remembered their sin long ago, and sadly returned home, finding fresh cause for alarm, when on opening their sacks, they discovered that their money had been restored to them. When they told their father all that had befallen them, he burst forth into bitter complaints, and absolutely refused to suffer Benjamin to return with them.

2. **The second Journey to Egypt.** But as time went on, and the corn brought from Egypt was consumed, it became evident that they must return thither, if they would live and not die. At length Judah stood forward, and offering to bear for ever the blame, if evil befell Benjamin, persuaded their

father to let him accompany them. Taking a little present, and double money, the brothers returned to Egypt. Arrived there, they were taken to the Viceroy's house, re-assured by his steward as to their money, and Simeon was restored to them. At noon Joseph returned, and *lifting up his eyes, saw his brother Benjamin*, his whole soul yearned towards him, and he entered into his chamber and wept there. Thence, having washed his face, he returned, commanded the attendants to set on bread, and the brothers sat down, according to age. Joseph sat at a table by himself, and from it sent portions to his brethren, *but Benjamin's mess was five times as great as any of theirs, and they drank, and were merry with him.*

3. **The Silver Cup.** Early the next morning, with replenished sacks, they commenced their return to Canaan. But they were soon overtaken by the steward, who charged them with stealing his master's silver *divining cup*. The sacks were therefore taken from the asses, and lo! in Benjamin's sack, where it had been placed by Joseph's command, the cup was found. Horror struck, the brothers returned to the house, being ready to remain slaves with Benjamin, rather than return without him to their father. On Joseph's declaring that the guilty one alone should remain, Judah in pathetic language described the grief of his father, *the old man*, if his favourite child should not return how he would certainly die, and lastly offered himself to remain a bondman in the room of Benjamin.

4. **Joseph makes himself known.** As he listened to the moving tale Joseph could restrain himself no longer, and desiring all attendants to leave the chamber, amidst many tears, he uttered the astonishing words, *I am Joseph, doth my father yet live?* But the brothers were too terrified to answer him. Then bidding them come near unto him, he again assured them that he was *Joseph their brother*, and bade them not be grieved that they had sold him into Egypt, for God had sent him thither to preserve life. He then desired them to return to his father, and bring him and their children, and settle in Egypt. News of what had occurred reached Pharaoh, and he seconded Joseph's wish that his father should come down. With waggons for removal, and rich presents, the sons of Jacob returned, and showed unto their father all that had befallen them. The sight of the waggons confirmed all their story, and the old man exclaimed, *Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

5. **Jacob goes down to Egypt.** On reaching Beer-sheba, in his journey southward, the Almighty appeared to Jacob in vision, and bade him fear nothing, for in Egypt He would pro-

tect him, make of him a great nation, and in the fulness of time, bring back his seed into the Land of promise. On the frontier of Egypt, the Patriarch met his long lost son, and *fell upon his neck, and wept upon his neck a good while*. Five of Joseph's brethren were then introduced to Pharaoh, and told him that they were shepherds, and requested leave to settle in Goshen, the eastern frontier of Egypt, offering to keep the regal herds. Permission was granted, and Jacob was then brought in to the monarch, and bestowed a blessing upon him.

6. **Death of Jacob.** At the close of 17 years, Jacob, at the age of 147, perceived that his end was nigh. When Joseph heard that his father was sinking, he brought his sons Ephraim and Manasseh to his bedside. *Guiding his hands wittingly*, the patriarch placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, though he was the first born. Joseph would have altered this, but Jacob refused, and thus bestowed upon the young men and their father a blessing. Though born in Egypt, they should be as his own sons, and become great tribes. Soon after Israel summoned all his sons to his bedside, and predicted their future destinies. First stood Reuben, *his firstborn, his might, and the beginning of his strength*. To him belonged of right the headship of the family, yet *unstable as water, he should not excel*. Next came Simeon and Levi, sons of one mother, they had been also brethren in cruelty and deceit, therefore they should be *divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel*. Then came Judah, and to him was assigned the blessing of the firstborn; his should be *the Sceptre and the Lawgiver, till SHILOH, the Peaceable or Peace Maker* should come.

7. **Jacob's Death and Burial.** Having next predicted the fortunes of his other sons, Jacob adjured them to carry his bones into the land of promise and lay them in the cave of Machpelah, and then he *yielded up the ghost*. After causing his father's body to be embalmed, at the head of a numerous retinue, Joseph set out with his remains to the appointed place of burial, making a circuit round Mount Seir in his journey. At the threshing-floor of Atad, opposite Jericho, he halted, and spent seven days in solemn mourning, whence the Canaanites called the spot Abel-mizraim, or the *Mourning of the Egyptians*. The sons of Jacob alone crossed the Jordan into Canaan, and laid their father by the side of Abraham, Isaac and Sarah.

8. **Death of Joseph.** On their return to Egypt, Joseph's brethren, fearful lest he might now requite them for all the evil they had done to him, sent a messenger to intercede on their

behalf. But he calmed their fears, and assured of safety, they dwelt together in the land of Goshen. At length, at the age of 110, perceiving that his end was near, he sent for his brethren, and assuring them that God would certainly bring them up into the Promised Land, took an oath of them that they would carry his bones up with them: he then died, and was embalmed, and laid in a coffin in Egypt.

BOOK III.

From the Settlement of the Israelites in Egypt to the Giving of the Law.

CHAPTER I.

1. **The Increase of the Israelites in Egypt.** Sacred History does not tell us much concerning the early portion of the period, during which the sons of Jacob sojourned in *the land of Ham*. We learn, however, that they were *fruitful and multiplied, and waxed mighty*, that many not only tended their flocks and herds in the land of Goshen, but settled in cities and villages, and became acquainted with many useful arts, with writing, the working of precious and common metals, with carpentry, pottery, gardening, and artificial irrigation. At the same time they would not fail to become acquainted with many forms of religious worship, before quite unknown. They witnessed the divine honours paid to Ra the Sun-god, to the sacred calf Memphis, and indeed to almost everything in *the heaven above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth*; and they themselves became tainted with the prevailing idolatry, and worshipped *other gods in Egypt* (Jos. xxiv. 14; Ezek. xx. 7, 8; xxiii. 3).

2. **Reign of a new King.** Before long an important event exercised a still greater influence on their condition. *There arose a new king over Egypt that knew not Joseph*, and looked with no friendly eye on the strange people settled on the eastern outskirts of his realm. He observed how rapidly they were increasing in numbers, and dreaded lest in time of war they might join the enemies of his kingdom, fight against his people, or effect their escape from the land. Accordingly he made up his mind to reduce them to the condition of slaves, and to curb their free and independent spirit, and set taskmasters over them, and employed them in gigantic works, in making bricks for his treasure cities, PITHOM and RAAMES. Day after day, therefore, their lives were made bitter with hard bondage, while beneath a burning, rainless sky, naked and in gangs

they toiled under the lash, in the quarry or the brickfield. But all this did not effect what the monarch expected. The more the people were afflicted, the more they multiplied. Orders were, therefore, given to the Hebrew midwives to destroy every Hebrew manchild. But the midwives refused to obey so cruel a decree, and this plan proved also in vain. Thereupon Pharaoh commanded that every Hebrew boy should be flung into the Nile. What Abraham had seen in vision had now come to pass. Strangers in a strange land, his descendants *sighed by reason of their hard bondage, and their cry came up unto God.*

3. **Birth of Moses.** But it was now, when everything seemed at the worst, that the future Deliverer of Israel was born. AMRAM, a man of the tribe of Levi, married JOCHEBED, a woman of the same tribe, and became the father of a daughter MIRIAM and two sons AARON and MOSES. The last was remarkable from his childhood for peculiar beauty, and his mother succeeded in concealing him safely for three months. At the close of this period, finding it impossible to hide him any longer, she made a boat or ark of stalks of papyrus, lined it with pitch, and placed the child therein among the reeds of the Nile. There she left her boy, while Miriam his sister stood afar off to watch the result. As the ark floated with the stream, the daughter of Pharaoh, with her maidens, came down to bathe in the river, and as she walked by the bank, her eye lit upon the ark, and she sent one of her attendants to fetch it. The maiden brought it, and when opened, *behold! the babe wept.* Struck with deep pity, though she knew it was one of the Hebrew children, the princess said she would rear it for her own. At this moment Miriam drew near, and asked if she might call a nurse for the child. Permission was given, and Jochebed once more saw her child restored to her with the command to rear it for its preserver. The boy grew, and after a while was brought to the princess, and she named it Moses, or Moshe, from *Mo, water*, and *USHE, saved.*

4. **Moses brought up in Pharaoh's Court.** Thus wonderfully preserved, Moses was brought up as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and was taught, as became his high position, *all the wisdom of the Egyptians.* He became mighty not only in knowledge, but also in *deeds* (Acts vii. 22), and might have *enjoyed to the full the pleasures* of the Egyptian court (Heb. xi. 25). But the traditions and hopes of his own nation had not, we may believe, been kept from him by his mother. Hence, when he was 40 years of age, he went forth to the land of Goshen, and beheld one of his countrymen not only toiling in the brickfield, but beaten by his Egyptian task-master.

Filled with anger, he *looked this way and that way*, and seeing no one by, slew the Egyptian, and hid the corpse in the sand of the desert. The next day, seeing two of the Hebrews quarrelling, he tried to make peace between them. But his good offices were not only rejected, but he found that the murder of the Egyptian was no secret. He had hoped that his countrymen would have welcomed him as a Deliverer, but they did not. Perceiving, therefore, that his life was in danger, he fled in a S. E. direction to the land of Midian, or the peninsula of Sinai in Arabia, where the descendants of Abraham by Keturah had settled down.

5. **Moses in Midian.** He was seated by a well in Midian, when the seven daughters of JETHRO, the chief and priest of the country, drew near to water their flocks. As they were filling their troughs certain Arabian shepherds rudely tried to drive them away, but Moses interfered, and defended the maidens against them. On their returning earlier than he had expected, Jethro enquired the reason, and was introduced to Moses, who agreed to dwell with him, and keep his flocks, and afterwards married his daughter ZIPPORAH, by whom he had two sons GERSHON (*stranger*) and ELIEZER (*God is my help*). And here amidst the silent valleys of Horeb, in quiet and seclusion, he passed 40 years of his life, learning patience and trust in God, and became acquainted with every path and track and fountain in a region, which he was afterwards to revisit under such different circumstances. Meanwhile the lot of the Israelites was no better than before. Still they toiled in cruel bondage, still their cry went up to God, and at length the time drew near for their deliverance.

6. **The Burning Bush.** One day Moses was tending the flocks of Jethro near the mountain-range of Horeb, when a wonderful sight arrested his attention. Before him was a bush of wild acacia, burning with fire, and yet not consumed. Astonished at this, Moses went near to ascertain the cause of this great sight, and as he did so, a Voice called to him out of the midst of the bush, saying, *Moses, Moses!* Moses answered the Voice, and then was bidden to draw not nearer, but take his shoes from off his feet, for the place on which he stood was *holy ground*. The wondering Shepherd did so, and then hiding his face, for *he dared not look upon God*, listened while the Lord spake again, assuring him that He was the God of his fathers, that He had seen the affliction of His people, and had come down to deliver them, nay more, had appointed no other than Moses himself to be their deliverer. Filled with awe, Moses sought at first to excuse himself from so great a task. First he pleaded that

single-handed and alone he could not effect the deliverance of the people. *I will be with thee*, was the reply. Then he asked what Name he was to announce to the people as that of Him who had sent him unto them, to which God answered, *Thus shalt thou say unto them, I AM hath sent me unto you*. But again Moses tried to excuse himself. What sign could he give the people of his commission? This difficulty was also met. First, he should cast his shepherd's crook upon the ground and it would become a serpent, and on taking the creature by the tail it would resume its former state. Then, he should put his hand into his bosom, and it would become leprous, but on returning it to his bosom, it would become as his other flesh. Thirdly, if neither of these signs was enough, he was to take of the water of the Nile and pour it on the ground, and it should become blood. Still Moses pleaded another obstacle; he was not eloquent, he was of *slow speech and a slow tongue*—*I will be with thy mouth, and I will teach thee what thou shalt say*, replied the Almighty, and assured him that He had already provided a spokesman for him. Aaron, his brother, who was known to be able to speak well, was at this moment on his way to meet him, and together they were to go before Pharaoh. Then at last Moses consented to go, and the object of the Vision of the Burning Bush was gained. ✠

CHAPTER II.

1. **Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh.** The first step Moses took towards fulfilling the commission he had received was to request of his father-in-law permission to revisit his brethren in Egypt. Jethro gave his consent, and with Zipporah and his two sons Gershom and Eliezer, Moses set out for Egypt. He had not gone far before he met his brother Aaron, to whom he explained the signs that God had told him. On reaching Goshen the brothers gathered together all the clans of the Israelites, rehearsed the words of the Lord, and showed the signs He had empowered them to perform. The Israelites received their announcement with joy, *and bowed their heads and worshipped*. The next step was to present themselves before Pharaoh, and request his permission that the Israelites might depart. But now their difficulties began. The monarch haughtily refused to permit them to leave the land, and in mockery of them and their God ordered that their labours should be made still more severe. Hitherto straw had been found them wherewith to make bricks, but now they were ordered to go and gather straw for themselves, and yet the tale of bricks must not be diminished. A command so tyrannical

it was impossible to obey, and the Israelites turned against Moses and Aaron, heaped reproaches upon them, and charged them with being the cause of their increased miseries.

2. **The Plagues.** Thus the first attempt of the brothers ended in complete failure. But God bade them not be dejected. Pharaoh had rejected His word, He would now speak to him in *deeds*. A second time, therefore, they appeared before the monarch and renewed their request. Pharaoh demanded a sign to attest their claim. Thereupon Aaron threw down his rod before the king and his courtiers, and straightway it became a serpent. Pharaoh, therefore, summoned his magicians, who cast down their rods and they also became serpents. But though Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, he would not allow that his servants had been defeated. He hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go. The *signs*, therefore, were now to become **PLAGUES**, and were inflicted in the following order: (1) *Water turned into blood*; (2) *Frogs*; (3) *Lice or Gnats*; (4) *Flies*; (5) *Murrain*; (6) *Boils and Blisters*; (7) *Thunder and Hail*; (8) *Locusts*; (9) *Darkness*.

3. **The Institution of the Passover.** It now only remained to inflict on the obstinate king God's *last sore judgment*. But before this terrible blow was struck, an important ceremony was to be performed by the Israelites. It was now the Hebrew month of Nisan, or Abib, the *Month of Green Ears*. On the 10th day of this month (a month to be henceforth the first of the Hebrew sacred year), the father of each household was to select a lamb or a kid. It was to be without blemish, a male of the first year, and was to be kept till the 14th day. On that day, just before the evening twilight, it was to be slain. A portion of the blood was to be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on the two side-posts and the upper door-post of their houses, and on the selfsame night, the lamb, roast with fire, whole, not a bone being broken, was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Of this meal each household was to partake with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, their staves in their hands, in haste, like persons in a hurry to depart. Of the flesh of the lamb nothing was to be allowed to remain until the morning, and all remnants were to be burnt with fire, and at midnight, while they were partaking of this mysterious meal, *the Lord*, they were told, *would pass through the land of Egypt*, and smite all the firstborn, both of man and beast, but when He saw the blood sprinkled on the houses of the Israelites, He would *pass over* them, and not destroy them.

4. **The Tenth Plague.** Such was the ordinance of the Passover. Having received from Moses the Lord's commands, each

household of the Israelites, when the 10th day of Nisan arrived, selected a lamb or kid, kept it till the 14th day, slew it, sprinkled the blood upon the side-posts and the upper door-posts of their houses, and at midnight were eating it as ordered, when suddenly the Angel of the Lord went through the land, and smote all the firstborn in Egypt, from the first-born of the captive in the dungeon to the firstborn of Pharaoh himself, and all the firstborn of cattle. In the darkness of the night the monarch arose, and no longer able to resist the power of Jehovah, implored Moses and Aaron to depart with the utmost speed, and not only he but all the people pressed upon the Israelites jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and festal apparel. Thus furnished by the Egyptians themselves with ornaments well becoming the day of their deliverance, the whole host of the Israelites, numbering besides women and children 600,000 men capable of bearing arms, went forth from Rameses, and in the darkness and cool of the night pursued their way.

5. **The Red Sea Triumph.** The nearest route to Canaan would have been in a N.-E. direction along the coast of the Mediterranean, and would not have taken more than a few days. But it would have brought the people into collision with the Philistines, and for such an encounter they were as yet unfit. From Rameses, therefore, they proceeded in a S. direction, and after a day's journey reached *Succoth, the place of booths*, and on the following day *ETHAM*, situated on the edge of the wilderness. Here the Lord Himself began to direct their march, appearing by day in a Pillar of Cloud, and by night in a Pillar of Fire, and instead of conducting them round the N. end of the Dead Sea, commanded them to encamp before *Pi-hahiroth (the place of sedge)* between Migdol (*a watch-tower*) and the W. side of the Red Sea, over against Baal-Zephon. Here they had scarcely encamped, when they perceived the horses and chariots of Pharaoh pursuing after them. In wild alarm the people cried unto Moses, and began already to complain of their deliverance. But their leader bade the trembling host stand still and *see the salvation of God*. Nor had they long to wait; for the Angel of the Lord, who went before the host in the pillar of Cloud and Fire, stationed himself behind them, and Moses, advancing towards the Red Sea, stretched over it his rod. Thereupon a strong east wind began to blow; the waters were divided; the bottom of the sea was exposed; and amidst walls of water on their right and their left, the caravan of the Israelites defiled in long procession, and when the morning broke had landed safely on the further

shore. Meanwhile their foes had rushed into the same awful pass. But at the morning watch, when they had reached the midst of the sea, the Lord looked upon them from the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, and caused their chariot-wheels to sink in the sand, so that they drove them heavily. In wild confusion they shouted to one another to turn back. But it was too late. Again the hand of Moses was uplifted, and straightway the waters began to break, and the sea to return in *his strength*. All escape was cut off. Fast and furious the sea swept on, and horse and chariot and horsemen sank like lead in the mighty waters. Then from the Israelitish leader, and the host which had seen the great deliverance Jehovah had wrought, there burst forth a noble song of praise and thanksgiving, while Miriam and her women accompanied them with timbrels and dances.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Journey from the Red Sea to Rephidim.** And now the Israelites commenced their journey, and entering the wilderness of Shur, in three days reached a well with bitter water, which they called Marah (*bitterness*). Thereupon the Lord commanded Moses to cast a tree into the waters, and they were straightway sweetened. They next halted at Elim, and on the 15th day of the 2nd month entered the desert of Sin. Their supply of bread was by this time consumed, and the people murmured against Moses and Aaron. But that very evening the Lord sent dense flocks of quails, and on the following morning there lay on the ground a small round thing, white, like coriander seed. Not knowing what it was, the Israelites called it Man-hu (*what is it?*), whence it was named MANNA. The people were only permitted to gather each morning sufficient for the wants of the day, and they were to leave none of it till the next morning. On the sixth day however, they were enabled to gather twice the usual quantity, and so provide for the Sabbath, when no manna was to be found.

2. **Victory over the Amalekites.** After seven days, the Israelites reached REPHIDIM (*places of rest*). In this valley the water failing, the people were so incensed against their leader, that they were ready to stone him. But the Lord interposing, directed Moses to strike a rock in Horeb, whence the water gushed out, and in memory of the event, he named the spot MASSAH (*temptation*), and MERIBAH (*strife*). While still encamped here, the Israelites were suddenly attacked by a tribe of Amalekites, who were descended from Esau and inhabited the Sinaitic peninsula. Thereupon Moses directed

a young man called JOSHUA, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, to meet the enemy with a select body of men, while he himself ascended the hill. There with the rod of God in his hand, and accompanied by Aaron and Hur, he stretched forth his hands in supplication. As long as his hands were uplifted, Israel prevailed, but as often as they dropped from weariness, Amalek had the advantage. At length Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands on either side, till the sun went down, by which time Amalek had been utterly defeated. To commemorate this victory, Moses erected an altar on the spot where he had stood, calling it JEHOVAH NISSI (*the Lord is my banner*), and wrote in a book the account of Amalek's treachery. Soon after this, JETHRO, the father-in-law of Moses, joined him with his daughter Zipporah, and her sons Gershon and Eliezer. To him Moses recounted all the wonders of the Exodus, and the perils of the way, at which Jethro rejoiced and joined in a sacrificial feast in honour of Jehovah. By his wise advice Moses now consented to appoint rulers and elders to preside over the people, and thus equalise the burden of administering justice, which had hitherto fallen heavily on himself alone.

3. *The giving of the Law.* At length the halt at Rephidim came to an end, and in the third month the Israelites set out in a southerly direction, and finally encamped on a plain at the foot of Mount Sinai. On their arrival, Moses was commanded to ascend the Mount, and the Lord informed him of His intention to enter into a covenant with the people, and to come unto him in a thick cloud that they might hear and believe him for ever. By way of preparing for so solemn a meeting the people were directed to purify themselves for three days. Then bounds were set round the Mount, and on pain of death all were forbidden to ascend or even touch it. When the morning of the third day dawned, peals of thunder broke the silence of the desert, and the Voice of a Trumpet sounded exceeding loud so that every soul in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people forth to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the Mount, which appeared altogether on a smoke. Presently the Lord descended in a flame of fire, and out of the thick darkness proclaimed with a great Voice to the assembled host the words of the TEN COMMANDMENTS. But so great was the terror of the people, when they heard the Voice of God thus speaking to them, that they fled away, and besought Moses to intercede with the Almighty that they might no more hear His Voice. Thereupon the Lord was pleased to appoint Moses to be a mediator between Himself and the Israelites,

and in this office he again ascended the Mount, and during forty days and forty nights continued in the presence of God, and received His further commands.

4. **The Golden Calf.** While, however, he thus conversed with Israel's King, his prolonged absence filled the people with doubt and perplexity, and they knew not what had become of him. Wishing, therefore, to break up from their long encampment, they requested Aaron to make them gods *to go before them*. In an evil hour Aaron yielded, and bidding them bring him the golden earrings of their wives and daughters, fashioned therewith a golden calf, on the model of those worshipped in Egypt. Then setting up an altar, he proclaimed a three days' festival, and the people offered sacrifice before the image, and joined in songs and dances. What they had done did not escape the eye of Jehovah, and He directed Moses to return unto the people. As he drew near accompanied by Joshua, and beheld with his own eyes the sin of the people, the anger of the Lawgiver waxed hot, and casting the Tables of the Law out of his hands, he brake them beneath the mount. Then seizing the image, he burned it with fire, and strewed the ashes in a neighbouring brook, and compelled the people to drink thereof. After sternly rebuking his brother for his sin, he next bade all who still remained faithful to Jehovah, gird on their swords, and without regard for tie of friendship, slay the offenders. Upon this the sons of Levi were found faithful, and arose and slew upwards of 3000 of the offenders, and their zeal found favour with the Almighty. On the following day, Moses once more ascended the Mount, and besought the Lord for the people, offering, if no other way of forgiveness was possible, to suffer the blotting out of his own name from God's book. His prayer was heard, and the Almighty promised that the nation should not be cut off, though he would certainly visit their sin upon them. After returning to assure the people of the Lord's forgiveness, Moses again ascended the Mount, and received His commands concerning the government of the host, and the mode in which they were to worship their invisible King.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Construction of the Tabernacle.** During the encampment of the Israelites before Sinai, which occupied more than a year, directions were given by God to Moses for the construction of a Tabernacle, where their religious services were to be conducted. While the superintendence of its erection was entrusted to BEZALEEL of the tribe of Judah, and AHOIAB of

the tribe of Dan, the people themselves were invited to contribute offerings of gold, silver, and brass, of blue, red, and crimson hangings, of fine linen, and goatskins, and ramskins dyed red, and the women employed themselves in weaving and spinning blue and crimson curtains.

2. **The Holy Place.** The area within which the Tabernacle stood, was an oblong square 100 cubits in length by 50 in breadth, and was entered from the East. In a line with the entrance was the ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERING, and the GREAT LAVER OF PURIFICATION. The Tabernacle itself was divided into two portions, THE HOLY PLACE, and THE HOLY OF HOLIES. (1) *The Holy Place* was 20 cubits in length by 10 in height and width, and was divided from the *Holy of Holies* by a veil of the most costly materials. Without any opening to admit the light from above, it was illumined only by a *Golden Lamp* on a *Candlestick* with seven lights, fed with fine olive oil, and kept burning night and day. Opposite the Golden Candlestick was the *Table of Shewbread*, made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, on which were laid twelve loaves, called also *bread of the Face*, being set before the face of the Lord. Made of the finest meal, flat and thin, they were placed every Sabbath on the table in two rows, six in each, and sprinkled with incense, and accompanied by libations of wine in golden bowls. Here they remained till the next Sabbath, when they were taken away and replaced by twelve fresh loaves and eaten by the priests in the Holy Place, out of which they might not be carried. Between the Table of Shewbread and the Golden Candlestick was the *Altar of Incense*, made of acacia wood and wholly overlaid with gold. On it incense was placed by one of the priests morning and evening with live coals taken from the Altar of Burnt-offering, that the smoke of the incense might ascend for ever before the Lord.

3. (2) **The Holy of Holies**, separated from the Holy Place by a costly veil, was a perfect cube of 10 cubits in length, breadth, and height. While the Holy Place was lighted by the splendid Golden Lamp, the Holy of Holies was left in utter darkness, typical of Him whom *no man hath seen nor can see* (1 Tim. vi. 16). Within it stood nothing but the ARK OF THE COVENANT, an oblong chest of acacia wood overlaid with the finest gold within and without, $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits in length, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in breadth, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in height, containing the Two Tables of Stone, on which the Ten Commandments had been inscribed. Round the top ran a crown or wreath of pure gold, and upon this was the Mercy-Seat, also made entirely of the same precious metal. At either end of

the Mercy-Seat rose two golden Cherubims with outspread wings, and faces turned towards each other, and eyes bent downwards, as though desirous to look into its mysteries (1 Pet. i. 12).

4. **The Levites.** Before the time of Moses the head of each family and the firstborn were priests in their own houses. But after the departure from Egypt, the tribe of Levi was accepted in place of the firstborn, and set apart for the service of the sanctuary, while Aaron and his sons were chosen to *minister in the priests' office*. The Levites who entered on their duties at the age of thirty were divided into three families, the sons of GERSHON, KOHATH, and MERARI. (1) The *Kohathites* held the first rank, as being the family to which Aaron belonged, and whenever the Tabernacle was removed, it was their duty to bear all the sacred vessels, including the Ark itself. (2) The *Gershonites* were charged with the removal of the curtains, veils, and tent-hangings. (3) The *Merarites* were entrusted with the removal of the heavier portion of the Tabernacle furniture, such as the boards, pillars, and bars.

5. **The Priests**, who were consecrated with more imposing ceremonies than the Levites, were attired in fine linen drawers and a closely-fitting tunic or cassock, white, woven whole in one piece and brodered, reaching to the feet. This was confined round the waist by a girdle wrought with needle work of the three sacred colours, blue, purple, and scarlet, intermingled with white. Upon their heads they wore a linen tiara in the form of the calyx of a flower, and in all their ministrations seem to have been barefooted. Their duties were to keep the fire ever burning on the altar of burnt-offering; to trim and feed with oil the golden lamp; to offer morning and evening the regulated sacrifice; to lay the fresh shewbread on the table every seventh day; to proclaim all solemn days by blowing the silver trumpets; to examine lepers and pronounce whether they were clean or unclean; to expound the law and teach the people the statutes of the Lord.

6. **The High-priesthood** was conferred first on AARON, then on his son ELEAZAR and his descendants, NADAB and ABIHU, his two elder sons, having been suddenly struck dead for presuming to burn incense with common or strange fire (Lev. x. 1—11). The vestments of the High-priest were far more rich and splendid than those of the priests. In place of the closely-fitting tunic he wore *the robe of the ephod*, which was all blue, of woven work, without sleeves, reaching down to the feet. The skirt of the robe was set with a trimming of pomegranates, blue, crimson, and purple, with a golden bell between

each pomegranate, designed to give forth a tinkling sound as the High-priest went in and out of the Holy Place. Over this robe was the Ephod itself, a short cloak consisting of two parts, one covering the back, the other the breast and upper part of the body, wrought with colours and gold. The two halves were united on the shoulder with two onyx stones, on each of which were engraved the names of six of the tribes. It was gathered round the waist by a curious GIRDLE of fine twined linen, adorned with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet. Above this, and attached to the Ephod by rings and ribbons of blue, was the BREASTPLATE OF JUDGMENT, a square of a span breadth, formed double so as to make a bag, and set with twelve precious stones in four rows, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes. Within the Breastplate were the URIM AND THUMMIM (*Light and perfection*), mysterious objects, by means of which the High-priest in some way was enabled to ascertain the Divine Will. He wore on his head a tiara, attached to which by a blue ribbon was a gold plate, on which were engraved the words *Holiness to the Lord* (Exod. xxviii. 36).

7. **The Passover.** The great festivals of the Israelites when all males were required to appear before the Lord were (1) *The Passover*; (2) *the Feast of Weeks* or *Pentecost*; (3) *the Feast of Tabernacles*. THE PASSOVER lasted from the 14th to the 21st of Nisan, or Abib. On the 10th day of this month each Paschal company, which might not exceed twenty or be less than ten, was to select a lamb or kid, a male of the first year, and keep it till the 14th day. If declared by the priests to be free from blemish, it was then to be slain at even in the court of the Tabernacle, and its blood poured round the Altar of Burnt-offering. It was next, after being flayed, to be taken to the house where the Paschal company intended to assemble, and there roasted with fire, whole and entire, without the breaking of a single bone, and to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

8. **The Feast of Pentecost.** At the end of seven complete weeks from the 16th of Nisan, commenced the *Feast of Weeks*, or of *Harvest*, or of *Pentecost*, from the Greek word for the *fiftieth* day. The festival lasted but one day, which was kept with a holy convocation. The chief offering presented was that of *two leavened loaves*, made from the new corn of the now completed harvest, which with two lambs as a thank-offering were waved before the Lord.

9. **The Feast of Tabernacles** was kept in the autumn on the 15th of the 7th month Tisri, and lasted 7 days. It was the most joyous of all the Festivals, being a feast of thanks-

giving for the ingathering of the fruits, and a commemoration of the dwelling of the Israelites in tents while in the wilderness. Hence during it they were commanded to live in tents or booths of green boughs of various trees, while the burnt-offerings at this feast were more numerous than at any other. If the festival fell in a Sabbatical Year, portions of the Law, chiefly Deuteronomy, were read each day in public.

BOOK IV.

From the departure from Sinai to the death of Moses.

CHAPTER I.

1. *The March from Sinai.* The Israelites had now been encamped at Sinai more than a year, and as a preparatory step towards entering Canaan, Moses took a census of the people, and then having celebrated their first Passover, the host set forward. But few days elapsed before they provoked the wrath of Jehovah by their murmurings, and were punished by a destructive fire, whence Moses named that place *TABERAH* or (*the burning*). The discontent of the people breaking out in consequence of a failure of food, the Lord permitted Moses to choose 70 elders, upon whom he bestowed a spirit of wisdom and prophecy, to share with him the burden of responsibility; and also promised to give flesh in such abundance, that at length they should loathe it. On the morrow, therefore, a strong wind from the sea brought up vast numbers of quails; the people *did eat and were filled*, but were instantly smitten with a severe plague, which *slew the mightiest of them*, and the spot where they were buried was called *KIBROTH HATTA'AVAH* (*the graves of lust*). Thence the host proceeded to *Hazereth*, where they were joined by an Ethiopian woman whom Moses had married. The arrival of the stranger excited the jealousy of Miriam, who with Aaron openly turned against Moses. But the Lord interposed to defend His servant, and sternly rebuking them, afflicted Miriam with leprosy. Through the intercession, however, of Moses, the judgment was shortly afterwards removed, and the Israelites proceeded to *KADESH BARNEA*.

2. *The Mission of the Spies.* From this spot which lay on the very borders of the Promised Land Moses sent 12 spies to search through the country, and bring back a report of its character, products, and inhabitants. They accordingly traversed the land as far north as Rehob at the entrance of Hamath and *then ascended by the south* (Num. xiii. 22), and came to Hebron where dwelt the gigantic sons of Anak. From

a valley near the city called Eshcol or (*the valley of the cluster*), they brought figs, pomegranates, and a bunch of grapes so large, that it had to be carried on a staff between two men, and with these returned to Kadesh, and reported that the land which they had surveyed was indeed a good and fruitful land. But most of them so dwelt on the dangers of the expedition, that the people broke out into murmurings against Moses and Aaron for having brought them thither, and refused to listen to CALEB the Kenezite, and the valiant JOSHUA, who exhorted them to courage. At this moment the glory of Jehovah appeared in their midst. With just wrath at their faithlessness, He pronounced the terrible doom, that, save Joshua and Caleb, not one of that generation should enter the Promised Land. They should die in the wilderness, while their children should wander therein 40 years, and the 10 spies were struck with instant death. They were then commanded to *return into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea*, and on their attempting to make a rush into Southern Palestine, were driven back by the Amorites and Amalekites.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.** While the host were yet at Kadesh, a formidable conspiracy broke out against Moses and Aaron. KORAH, a Kohathite of the tribe of Levi, and DATHAN, ABIRAM, and ON of the tribe of Reuben with 250 princes of the people, rose up against the Brothers, and openly charged them with taking too much upon themselves, seeing that all the congregation were holy unto the Lord. Therefore Moses referred the matter to the Divine decision, and bade them assemble on the morrow with lighted censers before the Tabernacle. Before long, the glory of the Lord appeared, and the servant of Jehovah offered to submit his claims to a test which none could dispute. If the ringleaders in this rebellion died the common death of all men, then the Lord had not sent him, but if the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, then it would be known that they had provoked the Lord. Instantly the earth opened and swallowed them up with all belonging to them, and a fire burst forth and consumed the 250 men who had dared to offer incense at the Sanctuary. A plague next broke out amongst the still murmuring host, which was only stayed by Aaron who with a lighted censer, stood between the dead and living and made atonement for the people, but not before 14,700 men had been stricken. Moses was then directed to lay up in the Ark an almond rod for each tribe with the name inscribed thereon,

and on the morrow, that bearing the name of Aaron had budded and brought forth fruit, thus for ever establishing the claims of the Aaronic priesthood. From Kadesh the host now turned into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, and for 38 years continued to wander in the deserts of Paran.

2. **The sin of Moses and Aaron.** When at the close of this period, they once more assembled at Kadesh, Moses was far advanced in years, and had to mourn for the death of Miriam, his sister. But saddening as was her loss, the conduct of the people whom he led, grieved him still more. For again on a failure of water they proved faithless, and on their renewed murmurings the Lord commanded him and Aaron to assemble them before the Rock facing the encampment, and promised that water should flow therefrom in obedience to their word. But now, for the first time, the wonted forbearance of Moses forsook him, and speaking harshly to the people, he twice struck the Rock. The water indeed flowed forth, but he and Aaron had alike failed to sanctify Jehovah in the eyes of the host, and for this sin both were excluded from the Promised Land.

3. **Death of Aaron.** Still, though precluded from actually entering the land, Moses was ready to lead the people *towards* Canaan, and therefore requested a free passage through the territory of the Edomites and Moabites. But this was denied them, and therefore the host were constrained to make a wearisome circuit round Edom. On reaching mount Hor, which overshadowed the mysterious city of Sela, or *Petra the (Rock)*, it was intimated to Moses that here his brother Aaron must die for his sin at the *Waters of Strife*. Arrayed in his priestly robes, and accompanied by his son Eleazar, Aaron ascended the toilsome height. There Moses stripped his brother of his robes and put them on his son, and then in sight of the borders of the land of Promise, in the 123rd year of his age, the great High-priest was gathered to his fathers, and was reverently interred on the spot where he died. Thirty days the host mourned for him, and then proceeding on their way, encamped at Ezion-geber. Setting out thence they entered on a barren, shadeless waste, and broke out into such bitter complaints, that the Lord sent fiery serpents among them, so that much people died. But on their repentance, Moses was directed to make a brazen serpent, and fix it on a pole, so that all who looked unto it were healed (Jn. iii. 14, 15). After this incident they marched forward in a northerly direction, and finally encamped on the east side of the Jordan.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Defeat of Sihon and Og.** The country north of the present encampment of the Israelites from the Arnon to the Jabbok, was at this time possessed by the Amorites. Their king was SIHON, and his capital was Heshbon, twenty miles east of the Jordan, on the parallel of the northern end of the Dead Sea. To him Moses sent an embassy requesting a passage through his territory, but the request was rudely rejected. Sihon would not allow the host even to pass through his borders, and assembling his forces prepared for battle. The Israelites did not decline the engagement, which took place at Jahaz, a little to the south of Heshbon, and utterly routed the Amorite king, captured his walled towns, and his numerous flocks and herds. Another Amorite chief, ruling from the Jabbok to the foot of Hermon, was Og, one of the last of the giant-race of Rephaim, whose stronghold was a remarkable district, called by the Hebrews ARGOB, or *the stony*. On a promontory southwest of this region, covered with rocks and boulders, was the city of EDREI (*strength*). Here the giant king of Bashan and all his people resolved to await the attack of the Israelites. But like the king of Heshbon he was utterly routed, his three-score fenced cities were taken, his people slain with the sword, and a trophy of this victory, long preserved by the Ammonites in the city of Rabbath, was the king's huge iron bedstead, nine cubits long by four wide.

2. **Balak, king of Moab.** After these two decisive battles, which made them masters of the entire country east of the Jordan, the Israelites encamped in the plains of Shittim, or *the Meadow of Acacias*, over against Jericho. South of their encampment was the territory of the Moabites, whose king BALAK viewed with no little alarm their late successes. After taking counsel, therefore, with the elders of the neighbouring people of Midian, he resolved to send for a prophet, who might imprecate an awful curse on the Israelites and so paralyse their arms. No man was deemed to possess greater power for this purpose than a famous prophet named BALAAM, the son of Beor, who lived far away at Pethor, beyond the Euphrates, but whose fame had spread across the Syrian desert even to the shores of the Dead Sea.

3. **Balak sends for Balaam.** Accordingly, elders both of Moab and Midian were sent to the distant eastern land with rich rewards to intreat the great prophet to lend them his aid. On hearing their message Balaam requested them to lodge there that night that he might ascertain the will of Jehovah.

Thou shalt not go with them, was the Divine reply, *thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed*. So he sent the messengers away, saying that he might not go with them. Thereupon Balak resolved to send a second embassy consisting of princes more and more honourable, with promises of still greater rewards. On this occasion also Balaam at first answered as before. Nothing, not even the offer of Balak's *house, full of silver and gold*, should induce him to *go beyond the word of the Lord*. But he did not send the princes away at once. In his heart he wished to go. He bade them, therefore, lodge there that night, and again consulted the Lord. This time he was directed to go, but warned against saying anything, save the words that should be put into his mouth. But though Balaam had been permitted to depart, he was to be again warned of the danger he ran. As he rode upon his ass, the angel of the Lord stood in the way with his sword drawn in his hand. But Balaam saw him not, and when the ass started aside at the sight he struck it, and turned into a path running through some vineyards. Again the angel met him, and the frightened ass, in its efforts to avoid him, crushed his foot against the wall. Therefore Balaam struck it again, but now the *dumb beast* in human accents *forbade his madness* (2 Pet. ii. 16), and the Prophet's eyes being at length opened, he beheld the angel, who rebuked him for his wilfulness, and again warned him, since he was bent on going forward, not to utter any words but those that should be put into his mouth.

4. **Balaam's Prophecy.** And now the journey was resumed, and Balak's watchmen announced to their master that the mighty prophet was approaching. Thereupon the king went forth to meet him at Kirjath-huzoth, *the town of streets*, and entertained him at a great feast. On the next day he led him up to a high place that looked down upon the camp of the Israelites, and erecting seven altars offered on each a bullock and a ram. Three times and on three different spots he repeated the same ceremony. But all was in vain. When he expected Balaam to pronounce the awful curse, the prophet declared he could not curse a people so visibly protected by Jehovah. In vain the king broke forth into bitter complaints. The prophet declared he could only speak the word put into his mouth, and as he stood looking down upon the goodly tents of the Israelites, predicted in sublime words their future greatness, and declared he foresaw a *STAR coming out of Jacob*, and a *SCEPTRE rising out of Israel*, and the mightiest nations vanquished before the people whom Jehovah had chosen.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **The Sin of Baal-peor.** But though the Prophet had thus pronounced eloquent blessings on the people he found he could not curse, his heart was filled with keenest malice against them, and while he lingered amongst the Midianites, he counseled them to join the children of Moab in seducing the Israelites from their allegiance to Jehovah. The festival of Baal-peor was at hand, and was celebrated with frightful licentiousness. He advised them, therefore, to tempt the Israelites to join in its excesses, declaring that thus they would become *as other men*, and forfeit the Divine protection. His artful suggestion was acted upon, and the Israelites fell into the snare. Had such a sin gone unpunished, the counsels of the wily Prophet would indeed have been successful. But a plague broke out, which swept off upwards of 24,000 of the people, and the princes of the tribes, at the command of Moses, slew the guilty and hanged them up before the Lord. On this occasion Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, and grandson of Aaron, specially distinguished himself by his righteous zeal, which was rewarded not only by the cessation of the plague, but by the promise that the priesthood should remain in his family for ever.

2. **War with the Midianites.** But a terrible vengeance was denounced against the crafty Midianites, and a thousand warriors from each tribe, under the command of Phinehas, accompanied by the Ark, went forth to execute it. The sacred silver trumpets sounded the signal for the onset, and the Midianites were utterly routed. Five of their chiefs were put to death; their cities were burnt; their women and children taken captive, and amongst the rest Balaam himself *received the wages of his unrighteousness* and perished by the sword (Num. xxxi. 8; 2 Pet. ii. 15).

3. **Settlements of Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh.** The country east of the Jordan, which the Israelites had taken from Sihon and Og, was to a great extent a long table-land famed for its rich pasturage. On the conclusion, therefore, of the war against the Midianites, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, which were especially pastoral, requested that they might be allowed to settle down in a region so exactly suited to their occupations. At first Moses thought they desired to escape from the arduous work which still lay before the nation. But the two tribes protested they were ready to send their troops across the river, and only wished for the present to build sheepfolds for their herds, whither they might return on the conquest of the country west of the Jordan. This promise

was deemed sufficient, and Moses assigned to them the territory they desired, giving to Reuben and Gad the country extending from the Arnon to the Jabbok, and entrusting to one half of the warlike tribe of Manasseh, whose warriors had taken a prominent part in the conquest of the country, the land of Bashan, and the almost impregnable tract of Argob.

4. *Last days of Moses.* Meanwhile Moses had once and again been told that the day drew near when he must die. Under the special direction, therefore, of Jehovah, he occupied himself in giving his final instructions for the future government of the nation. Joshua was appointed to be his successor; the boundaries of the Promised Land were marked out; forty-eight cities, including the six Cities of Refuge, were assigned to the tribe of Levi, and other regulations were made. Then warned by the recent sin of Baal-peor, he assembled the people and delivered to them his final counsels. Having reviewed the history of the preceding forty years, he reminded them of the goodness and faithfulness which had always followed them, in spite of their murmurings and discontent. He recapitulated the Law given on Sinai; appointed a day on which its blessings and curses were to be ratified by the nation with solemn ceremonies; and for the last time described the blessings which would surely accompany obedience to the Divine commands, and the terrible punishments which idolatry would involve, and turning to Joshua, bade him be strong and of a good courage, and assured him that Jehovah would be with him, and make all he did to prosper. Then, having pronounced his last solemn blessing, he ascended from the plains of Moab into the mountain of Nebo, to the highest point in the long range over against Jericho. Thence he surveyed the goodly Land so long promised to the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but on which he himself was not to set his foot. East and West, North and South he surveyed it, and then all was over. The great Prophet had served his day and generation, he had reached his 120th year, and his work was ended. There, *in the land of Moab*, he died, and He, whom he had served faithfully in all His house, buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against the idol-sanctuary of Beth-peor, but *no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day* (Deut. xxxiv. 6).

BOOK V.

Joshua and the Conquest of Western Palestine.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Preparations of Joshua.** Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, had, as we have seen, been already selected as the successor of Moses, and the leader of the Israelitish forces. When, therefore, the thirty days of mourning for that eminent servant of God were ended, preparations were made for the enterprise without delay. Provisions for three days were issued to the host, and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh were reminded of their promise to accompany their brethren and share the perils of the campaign. The first step to any real conquest of the country was the capture of the important city of Jericho, situated immediately opposite the camp of Joshua in a vast grove of noble palm trees, nearly 3 miles broad by 8 long. It was a fenced city, enclosed by strong walls, was the residence of a king, and abounded in silver and gold, in vessels of brass and iron, and from its position was the key of Western Palestine.

2. **Spies sent to Jericho.** The first act of Joshua, therefore, was to send two spies to reconnoitre this important place. Setting out from Shittim, and crossing the Jordan, they effected their entrance into the house of a woman named Rahab on the city wall. Their arrival was reported to the king of Jericho, and he sent to Rahab's house, and demanded their surrender. But she had already concealed them among the flax stalks spread out to dry on the flat roof of her house, and when the messengers arrived, informed them that the spies had departed, and advised a speedy pursuit. Thus misled, the officers of the king went after them in all haste, while she came up to them on the roof, and said the townsfolk having heard of the marvellous passage of the Red Sea, and of the defeat of the great Amorite chiefs on the east of Jordan, despaired of overcoming a nation thus protected by a God powerful *in heaven above, and in earth beneath* (Jos. ii. 11). These fears she herself shared, and now offered to assist them in escaping, by letting them down by a cord from her window, that they might fly to the mountains behind the city, and conceal themselves for three days till their pursuers were returned. As a requital for this kindness she implored them on the capture of the city to spare her life, and the lives of her father and mother, and all her relations. To this the spies assented, and having agreed that the scarlet cord should be

bound in the window whence they escaped, to mark out the house to their comrades, suffered themselves to be lowered down, and in the course of three days, after hiding in the mountains, once more crossed the Jordan, and announced to Joshua all they had seen and heard.

3. *Passage of the Jordan.* Early therefore the next morning the Hebrew leader broke up the encampment at Shittim, and descended to the lower banks of the Jordan. It was now the time of harvest, which ripens three weeks earlier in the plain of Jericho than in other parts of Palestine, and the Jordan, at this point three quarters of a mile wide, had overflowed all its banks. On the 10th of Nisan, and therefore four days before the Feast of the Passover, the signal for the passage was given. The priests advanced bearing the Ark, and presently reached the brim of the Jordan. But no sooner were their feet dipped in the water, than far up the river, *in Adam, the city which is beside Zaretan*, that is, about thirty miles from where the Israelites were encamped, the waters which rushed down from above, *stood and rose up upon a heap*, while those that came down towards the Salt Sea *failed, and were cut off* (Jos. iii. 16). Thus from north to south the waters were *driven back* (Ps. cxiv. 5) and the dry river-bed was exposed to view. Into it the priests descended bearing the Ark, and there they stood as if on dry ground. Meanwhile, below this spot, the host *hasted and passed over* (Jos. iv. 10), led by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. When at length all had ascended to the plains on the further side, Joshua gave the signal to the priests to come out of the river. Preceded by twelve chiefs of the tribes, with twelve huge stones taken from the bed of the Jordan, which were set up as a memorial, they moved from the spot where they had stood so long, and no sooner had they reached the other side than the waters rushed back to their wonted channel, and the river overflowed its banks as before.

4. *Celebration of the Passover.* News of this marvellous event reached the ears of the Canaanites, and filled them with the utmost alarm, nor durst they make any attack upon the Israelites, who were left in quiet possession of their advanced post on the western side of Jordan. Here the rite of circumcision, so long neglected, was performed, and in memory thereof, the rising ground of their encampment was called Gilgal (*rolling away*). They were now also in a condition to keep the Passover, which was duly celebrated on the 14th day of Nisan at even on the plains of Jericho, and the unleavened cakes for this Festival were made of the old corn of the land, and not of

the manna, which on the next day entirely ceased, and thus proved that their desert life was really over.

5. *Capture of Jericho.* The capture of Jericho was the next step to be taken, and while Joshua was deeply meditating thereon, there appeared to him a *Man with his sword drawn in his hand*, who declared himself to be the *Prince of the army of Jehovah!* In deep reverence Joshua fell on his face to the ground, and was bidden to loose his shoes from off his feet, *for the place on which he stood was holy ground.* Instructions were then given him respecting the method of the city's capture. Once a day for six days the host, preceded by the sacred Ark and seven priests each blowing a trumpet of ram's horn, was to march in procession round it. On the seventh day the circuit was to be made seven times, and then the priests were to sound a long continued blast. This was to be the signal for a general shout, on which Joshua was assured that the walls of Jericho would fall down flat, and the host would be enabled to advance straight into the doomed city. Once within it, the Israelites were to consider every thing save the house and family of Rahab as devoted to destruction. Man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep were to be slain, and the city itself was to be burnt with fire, and all that was therein, save the vessels of gold and silver, of brass and iron, which were to be consecrated to the service of Jehovah. Accordingly, early the following morning, the advance was ordered, and once a day for six days the strange procession passed round the city. At early dawn on the seventh day the same procession went forth, and compassed the city not once but seven times. The last circuit complete, the priests sounded a long continued blast, and on a given signal from Joshua, the great shout of the entire army rose to heaven. Immediately the walls of Jericho fell down flat, and the host advanced straight in, and captured it. In the house of Rahab, her relatives were gathered together as agreed, and were led forth to a place of safety without the camp of Israel. The rest of the inhabitants without exception were slain; the city was burnt, and every thing consumed save the vessels of gold and silver, of brass and iron. And not only was the proud "City of Palm Trees" thus utterly destroyed, but Joshua imprecated a solemn curse on any one who should attempt to rebuild it, *he should lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son should he set up the gates of it* (See 1 Kings xvi. 34). Thus the first step in the conquest was brought to a successful end, and the most important town in the Jordan valley, the key of western Palestine, was in the hands of the Israelites.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Defeat before Ai.** The passes into the central hills being thus secured, Joshua sent men to search out the position of Ai, a royal city on the east side of Bethel. The spies reported it as easy of capture, and that no more than 3000 men would be required to reduce it. On this Joshua dispatched the suggested number, and they advanced boldly up the ravine, but only to meet with an unexpected repulse. The men of Ai, strong in their high position, chased them down the steep descent from the gates, and slew about 36 of them. This unlooked for reverse excited the utmost despondency in the Israelitish camp. Joshua and the elders, with dust upon their heads, lay till eventide upon the ground before the Ark, expecting nothing less than a general attack of the Canaanites. From this dejection they were roused by the voice of the *Captain of the Lord's Host* informing them that the Israelites themselves were the cause of this defeat, some one had taken and concealed a portion of the spoil of Jericho; nor till atonement was made for this sin, could they expect any further success to attend their arms.

2. **Sin of Achan.** On the morrow therefore all Israel was assembled by their tribes, and an appeal was made to the sacred lot to discover the offender, who at length was found in the person of ACHAN, the son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah. Adjured by Joshua to make a full confession, he owned that from the spoils of Jericho he had secretly set aside a richly ornamented Babylonish, or Assyrian robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a solid wedge of gold weighing 50 shekels, and had hid them in the ground under his tent. Thither messengers were sent, and there the stolen property was found. Achan was then taken to a valley south or south-west of Jericho, and then stoned to death, together with his sons, his daughters, and all his family; while a great mound of stones was set up over the scene of the execution, and the valley was henceforth known as that of Achor (*trouble*).

3. **Second Attack on Ai.** The host was now in a position to resume the attack upon Ai. Accordingly Joshua set out from Gilgal, and on reaching the neighbourhood of the city detached 5000 men to place themselves during the night in ambush behind it. Meanwhile he himself, with the rest of his army, took up his position on an eminence north of the town. Early the following morning he descended into the valley, and the king of Ai no sooner detected them than he advanced with all his forces to the encounter. Thereupon the Israelites

feigned a retreat, and were hotly pursued towards the desert of the Jordan, while at the signal of Joshua's uplifted spear the ambuscade rushed into Ai and set it on fire. The smoke of their city ascending up to heaven was the first announcement to the inhabitants of the success of the stratagem of their foes. Attacked before and behind they were utterly routed, and their whole population, numbering 12,000, were put to the sword, and the city itself was sacked and burnt.

4. **Ratification of the Law on Ebal and Gerizim.** The necessary passes into the interior of the country being now secured, Joshua determined to take advantage of the terror which the success of his arms had inspired in the hearts of the Canaanites, and carry out the command of Moses touching the ratification of the Law on the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. Thither, therefore, the host repaired. An altar of unhewn stones was erected, and burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were sacrificed. The stones were then plastered with lime, and the words of the Law, probably the Ten Commandments, or the Blessings and Cursings contained in Deut. xxvii. inscribed thereon. Half of the assembled tribes then ascended the summit of Ebal, the other half that of Gerizim. In the intermediate valley stood the priests and Levites with the Ark, surrounded by the elders, officers, and judges, with Joshua at their head. Of the blessings and cursings of the Law each was then read aloud by the Levites, and as they read, to each curse the six tribes on Ebal responded with a loud *Amen*, and to each blessing the assembled thousands on Gerizim similarly testified their assent.

5. **Embassy of the Gibeonites.** On their return to Gilgal, the Israelites were met by an embassy from Gibeon, a royal city, inhabited by the commercial Hivites, and at this time the head of a small group of confederate towns, *Chephirah*, *Beeroth*, and *Kirjath-jearim*. Alarmed by the success of Joshua, the Canaanite kings had mustered their forces for a general attack upon him. In this the Gibeonites had resolved to take no part, and determined if possible to make a league with the Israelites. For this purpose they had sent their ambassadors arrayed in old and tattered garments and clouted shoes, carrying old sacks upon their asses, dry and mouldy bread, and goat-skin bottles patched and shrivelled, the better to keep up the appearance of being toil-worn travellers from a far country. Completely deceived by this wily embassy, without waiting to take counsel of the Lord, Joshua and the princes made peace with them. Within three days, however, they arrived in the midst of their cities, and found that they

were their near neighbours. Loud was the murmuring of the people against their chiefs when they saw how they had been duped. But the latter nobly determined to abide by their oaths, and in place of putting the Gibeonites to death, reduced them to the condition of bondmen, and made them *hewers of wood and drawers of water* for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord.

6. *Battle of Beth-horon.* Meanwhile news of these events having reached the ears of the southern kings, they resolved to attack the recreant city, and five powerful chiefs, the king of JERUS, the king of HEBRON, the king of JARMUTH, the king of LACHISH, the king of EGLON, marched against it, and commenced a regular siege. In their alarm the Gibeonites sent an urgent message to Joshua at Gilgal, bidding him come to their aid with the utmost speed. On this Joshua instantly arrayed all his forces, and by a forced march suddenly burst upon the Amorite kings, as they lay encamped before the city. Unable to offer any effectual resistance to so sudden an attack, numbers were slaughtered at Gibeon itself, numbers fled along the rocky ascent leading to Upper Beth-horon (*the house of caves*), about 4 miles distant. Hence, however, they were chased by the triumphant Israelites along the rough descent leading to Lower Beth-horon, and thence to Azekah and Makkedah, when a terrific storm burst forth; *the Lord thundered out of heaven, and cast down great hailstones* upon the flying Canaanites, *so that they were more which died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.* Standing on the summit of Upper Beth-horon, Joshua watched the foe flying in confusion. The Lord had already delivered them into his hands, and time only was needed to complete the rout. But the day was far advanced, and he feared the Canaanites might yet make good their escape. *In the sight, then, of all Israel,* he cried, *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.* And the Lord hearkened to the voice of His servant. *The sun stood still, and the moon stayed,* and in the lengthened afternoon the pursuit was continued without pause or rest. Arrived at Makkedah, somewhere in the maritime plain, the five kings hid themselves in a cave, shaded by trees. Thither also came the triumphant Joshua, and bade his followers *roll great stones to the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them.* Longer he would not tarry now, but when the battle was over, the mouth of the cave was opened, and the five kings were dragged forth, and as they lay prostrate upon the ground, Joshua bade his captains put their feet on their necks, and then slew them, and hanged them upon

five trees until the evening, when they were taken down, and flung into the cave where they had vainly tried to conceal themselves. Such was the issue of the eventful battle of Beth-horon. It sealed the fate of every important city of southern Palestine. One after another, Makkedah and Libnah, Lachish and Eglon, Hebron and Debir, fell before the victorious Israelites. From one captured city they passed on to another, conquering and to conquer, till they had smitten all the country from Kadesh-Barnea in the southern desert to the central plain of Esdraelon.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Defeat of Jabin.** News of the battle of Beth-horon before long reached the ears of a powerful chief in northern Palestine, JABIN (*the wise*), whose capital Hazor was the principal fortress in that part of the country. Determined to make a last effort to defeat the Israelites, he rallied round his standard the chiefs from the plains south of the sea of Chinneroth, from the valley of the Jordan, the maritime plain of Dor, and the as yet unconquered fortress of Jebus. Again encouraged by the Lord with the promise of a decisive victory, Joshua set out on a forced march, and burst upon the combined armies of the northern chiefs, as they were encamped by the waters of Merom. As before, his attack was irresistible. The Lord delivered the Canaanite hosts into his hand, and the Israelites smote them, cut the hamstrings of their horses, burned their chariots, razed Hazor their capital to the ground, and put all its inhabitants to the sword. This was the last of Joshua's recorded engagements. But now a long war thought to have lasted upwards of seven years occupied his energies, till by the time he had completed his campaigns, six nations and thirty-one kings had swelled the role of his triumphs.

2. **Division of the Land.** At length, when stricken in years, he was commanded to divide the conquered territory among the tribes. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, as we have already seen, had obtained their settlements on the East of the Jordan. It now remained to assign their portions to the other nine Tribes and a half. The mode adopted was twofold. (1) In some cases individual chiefs, putting themselves at the head of armed bands, obtained particular localities for themselves. Thus CALEB, the famous compeer of Joshua, reminded him of the promise of Moses, that he should possess the land around the city of Hebron, where forty-five years before they had plucked the enormous bunch of grapes. Joshua readily assented to the request of

his friend, and Caleb went up against Hebron, and drove out of it the giant sons of Anak. Thence he proceeded southward to DEBIR or KIRJATH-SEPHIR (*the city of books*), and promised to give to its successful assailant his daughter ACHSAH in marriage. Thereupon OTHNIEL his nephew attacked and took the fortress, and won the promised prize. (2) But the more general mode of dividing the land was by casting lots before the tabernacle at Shiloh. According to this arrangement (i) the *Southern* portion of the country was assigned to SIMEON, JUDAH, BENJAMIN, and DAN; (ii) the *Centre* to the two brother tribes of the *house of Joseph*, EPHRAIM and MANASSEH; (iii) the *North* to ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, ASHER, and NAPHTALI. One tribe alone received no share in this allotment. Devoted to the service of the Sanctuary, the tribe of Levi depended on tithes of the produce of the land and cattle. But besides this, from each tribe four cities with their suburban pastures, or forty-eight in all, were set apart for it. These included the SIX CITIES OF REFUGE, three on each side of the Jordan:

(a) *On the West.*

1. KEDESH in Naphtali.
2. SHECHEM in Ephraim.
3. HEBRON in Judah.

(b) *On the East.*

4. GOLAN in Bashan.
5. RAMOTH-GILEAD in Gad.
6. BEZER in Reuben.

3. **The Altar Ed.** The land having been thus divided, Joshua summoned the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, commended them for their bravery and fidelity, and bade them return to their own settlements beyond the Jordan. Accordingly they departed. But while yet on the western side of the river they set up a great Altar, not for sacrifice, but as a standing witness to all future generations that they were not separated in religion or interests from their brethren. No sooner, however, was the erection of this altar made known to the other tribes than they assembled at Shiloh, and resolved to make war upon their brethren, whom they deemed guilty of apostasy. But first they sent Phinehas and ten princes to expostulate with them. The embassy departed and laid before the two tribes and a half their complaint. Startled at the suspicion of faithlessness, the latter solemnly protested that they had no other intention than to erect a Memorial-Altar, to show that they had the same part and lot in the national interests as the rest of their brethren. Even Phinehas himself was satisfied, and the embassy returned with the joyful news that there was no ground for a quarrel or an appeal to arms, while the other tribes having named the Altar Ed, or a *Witness*, settled down in their allotted territories.

4. **Death of Joshua.** And now at length the land had rest, and the tribes on both sides of the river established themselves in their possessions. Before long Joshua, already well stricken in age, became aware that the day was at hand when he must die. Summoning, therefore, the tribes of Israel, with their judges and officers to Shechem, he for the last time exhorted them to cleave faithfully to their God, reviewed their past history, and reminded them of the duties they were called to discharge. Thereupon the people solemnly renewed the Covenant they had before made on the same spot, and as an abiding memorial of their promise, Joshua set up a stone Pillar, and wrote out the words of the Covenant in the *Book of the Law of God*. This done, he bade every man depart, and shortly afterwards died at the age of 110, and was buried in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, B.C. 1427.

BOOK VI.

Period of the Judges.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Idolatry of the Israelites.** Great as the conquests of Joshua had been, they had not achieved the complete reduction of the country, and large tracts still remained in the hands of the Canaanites. But the duty of subduing them had been solemnly enforced upon the nation by Joshua, and we find that all the days of the elders that outlived him, the people obeyed his commands. Thus Judah, in alliance with Simeon, attacked Bezek, slew 10,000 of its inhabitants, and captured its ferocious king Adoni-Bezek. The powerful tribe of Ephraim soon followed their example, and captured the town of Luz, or as it was now called Bethel. But they were not equally successful in expelling the Canaanites from other strongholds, and instead of driving them out, merely put them under tribute. In the same manner Zebulon and Naphtali spared the inhabitants of several towns within their borders. Thus contrary to the express commands of the Law, the Israelites were tempted to make leagues with the remnants of the Canaanites, then to intermarry with them, then to attend their idolatrous festivals, and in the end to worship false gods themselves, and practise some of the worst abominations. In the last five Chapters of the Book of Judges, (Judg. xvii—xxi.) which form a sort of appendix to it, and relate to this period, we have some striking illustrations of the disorder and lawlessness that now prevailed.

2. **Micah and the Danites.** There was living in Mount Ephraim a man named Micah, whose mother one day lost 1100 shekels of silver. So terrible was the curse she imprecated on the thief, that her son at length confessed himself the thief, and restored the money. On this she informed him that she had hoarded it up for the purpose of making a graven and a molten image, which accordingly were now made and set up in Micah's house, and a young Levite of Bethlehem-Judah consented to become his priest, on condition of receiving 10 shekels of silver a year, suitable vestments, and his living. Soon after this, the tribe of Dan being hard pressed by the Amorites, sent forth five spies to discover a new and suitable settlement. On their way northwards the spies came to Mount Ephraim and lodged in the house of Micah. There they found the young Levite, and requested him to ask counsel of God as to the success of their expedition. The answer was favourable, and resuming their journey, the spies at last reached the town of Laish in the far North. It was a colony from Sidon, and its people dwelt *quiet and secure*, tilling the fertile soil around. Having noted the spot, the spies returned and bade their brethren arise and take possession of it. Upon this 600 Danites guided by the spies drew near the house of Micah, and by a cunning stratagem succeeded in removing his images, and persuaded the Levite to accompany them. In vain Micah gathered together his neighbours and hurried after them, the spoilers only mocked him, and he was fain to return, while the 600 held on their way northward, and bursting suddenly upon the unprotected city of Laish, set it on fire, and massacred its people. Then they rebuilt it, calling it **DAN**, and there set up the images they had stolen. There too the young Levite, who was no other than *Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses*, ministered at the new sanctuary, and his descendants remained till the Captivity.

3. **The Tribal War.** Another proof of the disorder of this period is given us in the history of another Levite. He also dwelt on Mount Ephraim, and took a concubine from Bethlehem-Judah, who proved faithless and returned to her father's house. On this her husband went in quest of her, and on his return homewards passed through Gibeah of Benjamin. As towards evening he sat in the streets of the town, an old man offered him shelter and a lodging. But while they were at meat, certain of the lowest inhabitants of the place set upon the house, and treated the Levite's concubine with such violence that in the morning she was found lying dead before

the door. Enraged at this savage act, the Levite on his return divided her body into 12 pieces, and sent them among the twelve tribes. This ferocious summons to vengeance roused all Israel as one man, and 400,000 warriors met at Mizpeh, and solemnly vowed never to return till they had taken deep vengeance on the people of Gibeah. Messengers were therefore sent, demanding their surrender. But the Benjamites making the cause of Gibeah their own, assembled all their forces, and in two following engagements signally defeated the Eleven tribes, who then assembled at Bethel and enquired of the Lord whether a third engagement might be hazarded.

4. **Rout of the Benjamites.** The reply was favourable, and by means of an ambuscade Gibeah was set on fire, the inhabitants massacred, and all their warriors shared the same fate, with the exception of 600, who escaped to the cliff of Rimmon, about seven miles north-east of Gibeah. Here they entrenched themselves for four months, while the eleven tribes bound themselves by a vow to abstain from all inter-marriage with them. Regret, however, for the probable extinction of a tribe in Israel afterwards softened their hearts; and finding that Jabesh-Gilead, a town on the east of Jordan, had failed to take part in the late war, they put the whole population to the sword, save 400 virgins who were given in marriage to the remnant of Benjamin. These not sufficing, the Benjamites at a yearly festival at Shiloh carried off of the daughters of the place each a wife for himself, with whom they returned, repaired their towns and dwelt in them.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Othniel.** The two incidents just recorded illustrate the disorder of the period which followed the death of Joshua, and of the elders who outlived him. Forgetful of their vocation, the chosen people intermingled with the heathen, conformed to their rites and customs, and so forfeited the protection and blessing of their invisible King, who therefore *sold them to their enemies round about, and they were greatly distressed.* But on the first manifestation of repentance *He heard their cry,* and raised them up Judges or *Deliverers*, who saved them from their enemies. The crisis which called forth the first of these Deliverers, was the invasion of the country by *Cushan-rishathaim*, king of Mesopotamia, who pushing his conquests continually southwards, grievously oppressed the Israelites for eight years. At the end of this time, however, OTHNIEL, son-in-law of the famous Caleb, went out against him and defeated him, and so the land had rest for forty years.

2. **Ehud.** On the death of Othniel, the people again fell into idolatry, and the Moabites under EGLON, aided by the Ammonites and Amalekites, crossed the Jordan, and seized the ruined site of Jericho. Thence Eglon extended his dominion at least over the tribe of Benjamin, and exacted from them for 18 years an annual tribute, which was brought to him at Jericho. On one occasion, EHUD, the son of Gera a Benjamite, was selected to carry this proof of subjection. Having executed his commission, he accompanied his followers as far back as the *quarries*, or *graven images* at Gilgal, but then returned, and on pretence of having a message from God to deliver to him, obtained a private interview with Eglon as he sat in his summer parlour. The king thereupon bade his attendants withdraw, and as he rose from his seat, Ehud, who was left-handed, like many of his tribe, drew a long two-edged dagger from beneath his mantle, and stabbed him with such force as to leave the weapon in his body. Without lingering a moment, he then shut and locked the chamber doors, and fled to the mountains of Ephraim. There he blew a horn and roused the Israelites, who rushed down the hills towards Jericho. Meanwhile the attendants had opened the door of Eglon's chamber, and saw the corpse lying on the floor. Panic-struck at the death of their leader, and still more so by the unexpected rising of the people, the Moabites fled towards the fords of the Jordan. But the Israelites were awaiting them there, and suffering none to cross, slew upwards of 10,000 men. Rest was now restored to the tribe of Benjamin for eighty years, but the south-west borders were ravaged by the Philistines. They were, however, valiantly resisted by SHAMGAR, the son of Anath, who armed with nothing but a long iron spiked ox-goad, slew 600 of them, and thus obtained a temporary respite for his people.

3. **Oppression of Jabin.** The nation again falling into idolatry on the death of Ehud, another oppressor was permitted to afflict them, and this time he came from the north, where under a second JABIN, the Canaanites, once defeated by Joshua at the waters of Merom, had recovered some of their former strength. With his vast hosts and 900 chariots of iron, commanded by Sisera his captain, who dwelt at *Harosheth of the Gentiles*, he overran the country of Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulun. Such was the general terror, that, as in the days of Shamgar, the highways were unoccupied; village-life ceased in Israel; and the peasants retired for refuge to the walled towns. But even here they were not secure; *there was war in the gates, and in the places of drawing water the noise of the*

archers was heard, twanging their terrible bows. No resistance could be offered, for no weapons of war were left in Israel, and the spirit of the nation was completely crushed.

4. **Deborah.** In the course of time, however, a deliverer appeared. Under a palm-tree in the mountain-range of Ephraim, between Ramah and Bethel, lived a prophetess named DEBORAH, the wife of Lapidoth. Like Joan of Arc in after times, her soul was fired with indignation at the sufferings of her people, and at length from Kedesh-naphtali, a City of Refuge, not far from Jabin's capital, she summoned BARAK (*lightning*), the son of Abinoam, and commanded him to gather 10,000 men from his own and the tribe of Zebulun to the green summit of Tabor, promising to draw to the river Kishon Sisera and all his host, and there deliver them into his hand. Barak declined to undertake the enterprise, unless the prophetess accompanied him, and to this she assented, but distinctly warned him, that as he was willing to lean upon a woman's aid, so into the hands of a woman would the Lord deliver his enemy.

5. **Barak's Army.** Leaving her seat of judgment, Deborah then accompanied Barak to Kedesh, and he having gathered around him 10,000 men, marched to the summit of Tabor. Here he was joined by the princes of Issachar, and by detachments from Ephraim, Benjamin, and north-eastern Manasseh. Other tribes, however, came not thus zealously to the *help of the Lord against the mighty*. Dan and Asher joined not their brethren, the name of Judah is not even mentioned among the patriot forces, and Reuben and Gad lingered in their pastures east of the Jordan. But amidst the wavering of many hearts, Zebulun and Naphtali prepared to *jeopardize their lives unto the death* on the high places of Tabor. Meanwhile certain of the Kenites who dwelt near Kedesh told Sisera of the sudden movement of Barak towards Tabor, and thereupon quickly gathering his forces, he encamped on the plain of Jezreel, between the friendly towns of Taanach and Megiddo.

6. **The Battle of the Kishon.** At length the heroic Deborah gave the signal for the battle, and the patriot tribes rapidly descending the mountain, fell upon the hosts of Sisera, and threw them into wild confusion. As they fled along the plain, not only the troops of Barak, but *the stars in their courses*, the elements of heaven, began to fight against the Canaanites. A furious storm of rain and hail gathered from the east, and bursting in their faces rendered useless the bows of their archers, and swelled into a torrent the ancient stream of the KISHON (*twisted or winding*). Rushing fast and furious,

it swept away their chariots and horses, and Sisera's host, entangled and overwhelmed, could not stand for a moment before the avenging Barak, or make good their escape.

7. **Death of Sisera.** Meantime Sisera himself fled away on foot northwards to the friendly tribe of Heber the Kenite, where he hoped for safety from his pursuers. As he drew near the tent of Jael, Heber's wife, she went forth to meet him, saying, *Turn in my lord, turn into me, fear not*, and he turned in, and she covered him with a rug. Spent and weary, he asked for a little water to drink, and opening the skin bottle of milk, such as always stands by Arab tents, *she brought forth butter*, or "thick curdled milk," and presented it to him in "the bowl used for illustrious strangers," and covered him again with the rug. Thus assured, Sisera bade her deny his presence if any enquired for him, and lay down and slept. But other thoughts than those of kindness soon came over Jael, and at length taking one of the sharp pointed wooden tent nails and a mallet, she went softly to him and smote him with such force that the nail entered into his temples, and fastened his head to the ground, and so he died. Meanwhile Barak drew near, and Jael bringing him in showed him his foe lying dead upon the ground. Thus on that day, as the prophetess had said, *God delivered Sisera into the hand of a woman*, and together she and Barak returned from the battlefield, chanting a Triumphal Hymn, and celebrating the great victory which now secured to the land rest for 40 years.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Invasion of the Midianites.** But again the Israelites relapsed into idolatry, and practised the worst abominations that disgraced the worship of Baal, and so drew down upon themselves a punishment more severe than any they had yet endured. The Midianites, Amalekites, and *the children of the East*, or the Arabian tribes beyond the Jordan, led by two superior chiefs, having the title of kings, ZEBAH and ZALMUNNA, and two inferior chiefs, OREB and ZEEB (*the Raven and the Wolf*), poured into the country and destroyed the crops. Thus for seven years the Israelites were reduced to the greatest straits, so that they left the plains and fled for refuge to dens or catacombs which they cut out of the rocky mountains, or to the lime-stone caves with which Palestine abounds.

2. **Call of Gideon.** As so often before, the Deliverer came from the quarter most exposed to the ravages of the invaders. At Ophrah, in the hills of western Manasseh, lived a high-born Abiezrite, named JOASH, who was descended from one of

the princely families of Manasseh, and in a skirmish with the enemy had lost all his sons save one, named GIDEON. On one occasion, as Gideon was threshing wheat behind the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites, an Angel appeared and informed him that *he* was the destined saviour of his people, and that he should *smite the Midianites as one man*. On Gideon's requesting a sign to assure him of the truth of this announcement, the Angel directed him to take a kid and cakes of unleavened bread, and present them under the oak, then to lay the flesh and cakes upon the rock, and pour the broth over them. He then touched them with a rod, and straightway there rose up fire from the rock and consumed the offering, and the Angel instantly disappeared.

3. **Gideon destroys the Altar of Baal.** When he had been thus solemnly called to be the deliverer of his countrymen, the Lord appeared to Gideon in a dream, and bade him throw down an altar which his father had erected in honour of Baal, and to build in its place an altar to Jehovah, and sacrifice thereon his father's second bullock of seven years old. With the help of his servants Gideon during the night did so, and on the morrow the people were surprised to find that the altar had disappeared. Enquiry led to the detection of the offender, and Joash was bidden to bring forth his son that he might be put to death. But he replied with irony, *Will ye take upon yourselves to plead Baal's cause? let him plead for himself*. Whence Gideon was called JERUB-BAAL, or the *Trier of Baal*.

4. **Gideon's Army.** Gideon was now directed to carry out the second part of his commission, and having first gathered round him his own clan of Abiezer, he sent messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, and Manasseh, inviting their aid against the common enemy. Before proceeding further, however, he requested another sign from Jehovah to encourage him in his arduous task. A double sign was, thereupon, vouchsafed to him. A fleece of wool, first dripping with dew while all the soil around was hot and dry, then dry while all the ground was damp, convinced him that the Lord would indeed deliver Israel by his hand. Meanwhile upwards of 32,000 men had gathered round him, and with this force he encamped near the springs of Jezreel, on the slopes of Gilboa. But the host was too many for the Divine purposes. If they were victorious, they might vaunt that their own arms had saved them. Proclamation was, therefore, made that all who were afraid to persevere in the enterprise might return to their homes, whereupon upwards of 22,000 instantly went their way. But still there were too many. So Gideon took the remaining 10,000

to the spring, and watched them as they assuaged their thirst. While all the rest bowed down upon their knees, 300 *putting their hand to their mouth, lapped of the water with their tongues as a dog lappeth.* These 300 Gideon set by themselves, the rest he sent away. Night drew on, and he was left alone on the brow of the steep mountain which overlooks the plain of Jezreel, where the Midianites and all the children of the East lay encamped as numerous *as the sand on the sea shore.* To confirm his faith in this great crisis God now bade him with Phurah his armourbearer drop down from the height and go to the host of the enemy. Accordingly the two crept down in the still of the night to the outskirts of the Midianitish camp, and there Gideon heard a man tell his fellow how he had dreamt a dream, and had seen a cake of barley bread tumbling into the host of Midian, and smiting a tent that it fell. To this the other replied, *This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash; into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.*

5. *Gideon's Stratagem.* Thus encouraged Gideon returned up the mountain, and dividing his little army into three companies, gave to every man a horn, an earthen pitcher, and a torch. Then bidding them follow him he again stole down in the middle watch towards the Midianitish camp, round which the three companies following silently took their places. Before long Gideon gave the signal, and instantly 300 horns blew, 300 pitchers crashed, 300 torches blazed, and the war-cry of the Israelites rent the air. Roused from their slumbers, and thrown into inextricable confusion, the Midianites and Amalekites, fancying themselves attacked by an enormous force, turned their swords against one another, and then fled with one accord towards the Jordan, hoping to reach the fords of Bethbarah, under the hills of Ephraim. But the Ephraimites, to whom Gideon had already sent messengers, were beforehand with them, and captured the two chiefs, Oreb and Zeeb, and slew them and cut off their heads. The two kings, however, Zebah and Zalmunna, crossed the river with a large force, and these Gideon with his 300 men hotly pursued. Annoyed, now the victory was won, that they had not been sooner summoned to join in the battle, the men of Ephraim displayed towards him no little passion. But pointing to the bloody heads of the princes they had slain, he enquired whether the *grapes Ephraim had already gleaned were not better than the entire vintage of his little clan of Abiezer.* This soft answer turned away their wrath, and the chase was renewed.

6. *The Pursuit of the Midianites.* Two places on the track

of the pursuit refused to befriend Gideon, and to supply his exhausted troops with bread, Succoth near the Jabbok, and Penuel further up the mountains. Halting only to threaten them with vengeance on his return, he hurried on after the kings Zebah and Zalmunna, who had reached Karkor in the open wastes east of the Jordan. Here they thought they were safe, but Gideon burst upon them, put them to complete rout, and at last captured the two kings. Then in triumph the conqueror returned, and on the way razed the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city, and after showing the captive kings to the seventy-seven chiefs of Succoth, beat them to death with thorny branches of acacia. Then he pushed westwards towards his native Ophrah, and on the way enquired of the captive kings what manner of men they were whom they had murdered on the slopes of Tabor. *As thou art, so were they*, was the reply; *each one resembled the children of a king*. The warrior knew they were his brothers, and summoning his firstborn JETHER, he bade him draw his sword and slay the murderers. But the boy quailed before those mighty kings, and Gideon himself was fain to take the sword and slay them. The immediate effect of this signal victory was greater than that of any other. Not only had the land rest for forty years, but now for the first time the Israelites offered hereditary royal dignity to the conqueror. Gideon declined the flattering proposal. One request only did he make of the grateful tribes, that they would give him the golden earrings and other ornaments they had taken from the foe, and with these he made an ephod, and put it in his native Ophrah, and *all Israel went a whoring after it*. After this Gideon lived in peace to a good old age, and having multiplied wives and begotten seventy sons, descended in peace to the tomb of his father Joash.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Abimelech.** After the death of Gideon, the Israelites again fell away into idolatry, and set up the image of Baal-Berith (*Baal of the Covenant*), in the city of Shechem. Meantime Gideon's seventy sons appear to have ruled over some portion of the country, and one of them, ABIMELECH, whose mother had been a slave and a native of Shechem, proposed to his relatives that he should be invested with the supreme power. They consented, and lent him seventy pieces of silver from the sanctuary of Baal-Berith, with which he hired a body of men, and going to his father's house at Ophrah, murdered all his brethren, save JOTHAM the youngest, and was solemnly anointed king by the men of Shechem.

2. **Jotham's Parable.** Tidings of what was going on reaching the ears of Jotham, he stationed himself on one of the rocky heights of Mount Gerizim, and bade the men of Shechem listen, while he addressed to them the earliest Parable, that of the *Bramble-king*. Once, he said, the Trees went forth to anoint a king over them. The Olive, the Vine, the Fig were each asked to accept the royal dignity, but each declined. The Trees then asked the Bramble, which not only accepted the honour, but bade the others put their trust in its shadow, and threatened, if they did not, that fire should come forth from it and devour even the cedars of Lebanon. Jotham then reminded the Shechemites of all his father had done for them, bade them rejoice, if they thought they had done well in electing Abimelech, and if not, expressed a hope that a fire might come forth and destroy him and all who had joined in electing him. With these words he turned and fled.

3. **Death of Abimelech.** His Parable was soon fulfilled. For three years Abimelech maintained his power, residing himself at Arumah, but entrusting Shechem to Zebul, his viceroy. At length Gaal, the son of Ebed, the leader of a body of freebooters, persuaded the men of Shechem to rebel. Zebul heard of this, and sent word to Abimelech, bidding him levy his forces and surprise the plotters. After a desperate battle Abimelech thereupon captured Shechem, put all its people to the sword, and sowed the ruins of the city with salt. A few of the insurgents, however, had fled to the temple of Baal-Berith. Thither Abimelech pursued them commanding his forces to hew down branches of trees; these he piled against the hold, set them on fire, and suffocated and burnt those within. Thence he repaired to Thebez, and captured the town. But again a remnant took refuge in one of its strong towers, and forcing his way up to it, Abimelech was on the point of repeating the tactics he had found successful at Shechem, when a woman flung a fragment of a millstone at his head. Unwilling to die thus ingloriously, he bade his armourbearer thrust him through with his sword, and so expired. Other judges now succeeded, of whom TOLA, of the tribe of Issachar, governed Israel for 23 years, and after him JAIR of Gilead, who during 22 years shared his almost regal honours with his thirty sons.

4. **Invasion of the Ammonites.** But the recent judgments did not restrain the Israelites from practising idolatry even to a greater degree than before. The punishment they thus drew down upon themselves came from two quarters. On the south-west the Philistines rose, and conquered part of the country, while on the east the Ammonites crossing the Jordan

ravaged the territories of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. So terrible was the oppression they now endured, that at length the Israelites put away their false gods, and declared they would serve Jehovah, if He would but this once deliver them.

5. **Jephthah.** In answer to their prayer, the Lord raised up a deliverer in the person of JEPHTHAH, a native of Gilead, who being driven forth from his father's house had put himself at the head of lawless men, and made incursions into the neighbouring country. To him the tribes on the east of Jordan now turned, and promised him the chieftaincy, if he would lead them against the Ammonites. Jephthah consented, and sending messengers to the Ammonites, urged the right of his countrymen to the land of Gilead. But they refused, and having collected warriors from various quarters he confronted them in the forests of Gilead, put them to complete rout, and captured twenty cities, from Aroer unto Minnith.

6. **Jephthah's Vow.** But a sad incident cast a deep shadow over his triumphal return. Before the battle, in imitation of heathen customs, he had vowed to sacrifice unto Jehovah whatever should first come forth from his house to welcome him on his return. As, therefore, he drew near his home, his daughter and only child came forth to meet him with timbrels and dances. On seeing her, Jephthah rent his clothes, and with the utmost grief made known to her his vow. But the noble maiden did not decline the awful sacrifice demanded of her. All she asked was that for two months she might be allowed to wander with her companions among her native mountains and bewail her virginity. At the close of this period she returned to her father, and he, without referring the matter to the High-priest, *did with her according to the vow that he had vowed.* In memory of the devotion of this noble maiden, the daughters of Israel were wont for four days in each year to go up into the mountains of Gilead, and there praise and lament her death.

7. **Jealousy of Ephraim.** But Jephthah did not long enjoy his triumph. Like Gideon before him, he had to endure the complaints of the haughty tribe of Ephraim, for not inviting them to share in the glories of the late victory. Now, however, they went further than before, for they invaded the territory of Gilead, and commenced a second tribal war, in which they were thoroughly worsted. Rushing from the battle-field in confusion to the fords of Jordan, they found their passage cut off by Jephthah's forces, who allowed none to cross that could not pronounce the word SHIBBOLETH (*a stream or flood*). Upwards of 42,000 failed to pronounce it aright, and so revealed

their origin, and were massacred. The supreme authority Jephthah only lived to enjoy for six years, when he died, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. After him IBZAN of Bethlehem in Zebulun judged at least north-western Israel for seven years; ELON of the same tribe, for ten years; ABDON of Pirathon near Shechem, for eight years.

CHAPTER V.

1. **Oppression of the Philistines.** Meanwhile the Philistines had established themselves in the south-western lowlands, and commenced a course of deadly hostility against the Israelites. Their oppressions naturally pressed most severely on the little tribe of Dan, already hard pushed by the Amorites. From this tribe, then, the Deliverer appeared, but, unlike others before him, was specially set apart for his work even before his birth.

2. **Birth of Samson.** On the high hill of Zorah overlooking the lowlands of Philistia dwelt at this time a Danite named Manoah. His wife had no child, but an angel appeared to her and announced that she was about to become the mother of a son, whom she was to devote as a *Nazarite* to the service of God. No razor was ever to come upon his head; wine and strong drink he was never to touch; and he should commence the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines. In due time the child was born, and was named *Samson* (*the sunlike, or the strong*). As he grew, he became distinguished for supernatural strength, but his first action, when come to man's estate, did not display that enmity to the Philistines which his parents might have expected. At Timnath he saw one of the daughters of that nation, and he resolved to marry her. Sorely against their will his father and mother went down with their wayward son to the vineyards of Timnath. On the way Samson met a young lion, and though he had nothing in his hand, *rent it as he would have rent a kid*; and without mentioning the matter to his parents went with them to the town, and talked with the woman, and she pleased him well. On his second visit to the place he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and found amongst the bones a swarm of bees. Taking a portion of the honey, but still saying nothing of his exploit, he joined the marriage festival.

3. **Samson's Riddle.** This lasted several days, and on one occasion Samson put forth a riddle to his thirty Philistine "companions," promising thirty changes of garments to any who guessed it, but demanding the same of them if within the

days of the feast they failed to discover it. The young men accepted the challenge, and Samson put forth his riddle, saying,

*Out of the eater came forth meat,
Out of the strong came forth sweetness.*

For three days the Philistine youths tried to unravel it, and failed. Then they beset Samson's wife, declaring they would burn the house over her head and herself in it, if she did not discover it. With tears, therefore, she implored Samson to reveal the secret, and at last he told her, and she revealed it to the thirty Philistines, who came to him on the evening of the last day of the festival and said,

*What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?*

Seeing clearly how they had been able to find it out, he went down to Ashkelon, and slaying thirty men brought the stipulated reward.

4. **The Burning of the Cornfields.** Shortly afterwards Samson returned to Timnath to present his wife with a kid, but found that her father had bestowed her upon another. Enraged at this he resolved to wreak his vengeance on the Philistines, and having caught 300 foxes fastened them tail to tail with lighted firebrands, and sent them into the cornfields and vineyards. Terrible was the mischief thus inflicted, and the Philistines no sooner discovered who was its author than they went to the house of Samson's late wife, and burned her and her father to death. This roused Samson to inflict on them a great slaughter, after which he arose and took up his abode on the lofty cliff of Etam, near Bethlehem. Thither the Philistines pursued him, and demanded his surrender of the men of Judah, three thousand of whom actually scaled the rocky cliff and brought Samson bound with new cords to his foes. On his approach the Philistines raised a mighty shout. But at the moment the captive burst his bonds as though they had been cords of flax burnt in the fire, and seizing the jaw-bone of an ass, and aided probably by the now inspirited Israelites, slew a thousand of the Philistines.

5. **Samson and Delilah.** Samson is next found at Gaza (*the strong*), which had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, who encompassed the gate intending to capture him. But at midnight he arose, and taking the doors of the gate and the two posts carried them, bar and all, to the top of the hill near Hebron. After this he fell in love with Delilah, a Philistine courtesan, who on the promise of enormous rewards from the lords of that nation undertook to discover the secret of his

strength. Three times she implored him to reveal the secret, but he succeeded in putting her off with wiles. Green withes, new ropes, the binding of his seven locks to the web, all these expedients were useless, and he escaped with ease from his enemies. The fourth time, however, she succeeded—the giant told her all his heart, and revealed the secret of his Nazarite vow. While, therefore, he was asleep upon her knees, she caused his seven locks to be shaved off, and when he awoke Samson found that his strength was gone. The watching Philistines sprang into the chamber, bored out his eyes, and brought him bound with brazen fetters to Gaza, where they made him grind in the prison-house.

6. *Death of Samson.* Then, in honour of their deliverance from their dreaded foe, a day was fixed for a festival to Dagon, their national deity, half man and half fish. The temple where the festival was held was full of men and women, and even on the roof upwards of 3000 were packed together. Hither the blinded giant was led by a lad to make sport for his brutal captors. At his own request he was suffered to feel the pillars on which the temple stood, and standing there he prayed that for once his old strength might come back to him. Then taking hold of the pillars with both hands he bowed himself with all his might, and the temple walls fell in, and crushed the lords of the Philistines and the assembled crowd. Samson's body was extricated from the ruins, and was laid by his brethren and kinsmen in the burial-place of Manoah his father, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

7. *The Story of Ruth.* After the account of this remarkable man, Sacred History presents us with a little story, which strikingly illustrates some of the calmer intervals in the disturbed period of the Judges. Either in the time of Ehud, or, as some think, of Gideon, there went forth during a famine from Bethlehem-Judah a family consisting of ELIMELECH, NAOMI, and their two sons, MAHLON and CHILION, to seek a home across the Jordan in the land of Moab. Here Elimelech died, and his two sons married two of the daughters of Moab, ORPAH and RUTH. After the lapse of ten years his sons also died, and Naomi hearing that the famine had ceased in Israel, returned to her native land, with her daughter-in-law RUTH, whom no intreaties could induce to remain behind. It was the beginning of barley-harvest when they returned, and Ruth went to glean near Bethlehem in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy kinsman of Elimelech. The appearance of the beautiful stranger attracted the notice of Boaz, and he permitted her not only to glean in his fields, but to share with his labourers their

provisions. By the advice of her mother, Ruth now claimed kinship with Boaz, and he was not slow to acknowledge it. A nearer kinsman, however, was first asked to discharge the duties of kinship, to redeem the land which had belonged to Elimelech, and take Ruth in marriage; but he declined, and then Boaz redeemed the land, and married Ruth, by whom he became the father of Obed, the grandfather of King DAVID, and the ancestor of great David's greater Son.

BOOK VII.

From the time of Samuel to the Accession of David.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Eli at Shiloh.** During the twenty years that Samson judged Israel, the high-priesthood had been filled by ELI, who appears to have discharged the united duties of High-priest and Judge. Inside the gateway leading up to the Tabernacle at Shiloh was a throne on which Eli used to sit, and thence survey the worshippers as they came up on high days to the festivals. Year by year, as he sat there, he would see amongst the pilgrims the family of Elkanah, a man of Ramathaim-Zophim in Mount Ephraim, a Levite in the line of Kohath. By his wife Peninnah he had several children; by Hannah, his favourite wife, he had none, which brought down upon her many taunts from her rival. On one occasion as ELI sat at the gate Hannah remained long in silent prayer at the sanctuary. The High-priest saw her lips move, but heard no sound of her voice. Thinking that she had indulged to excess at the feast, he rebuked her. Then Hannah told him of her secret grief, and the aged priest, convinced of his error, quickly made amends by bestowing on her his blessing, and expressing a hope that the Lord might grant her petition.

2. **Birth of Samuel.** The story of the wife of Manoah was probably not unknown to Hannah, and she too vowed that if the Lord would grant her a man-child, she would devote him as a Nazarite all the days of his life. Her prayer was heard. Before the Feast of Tabernacles came round again, she had become the mother of a son, to whom she gave the appropriate name of SAMUEL, *the Asked or Heard of God*. When he was weaned, she brought him to Shiloh, and presented him to Eli, as the child for whom she had prayed, and whom she now wished to offer as a loan unto the Lord. In striking contrast with the simplicity and innocence of the young child, who

henceforth waited upon Eli, the two sons of that pontiff, HOPHNI and PHINEHAS, by their rapacity and lust had filled all Israel with loathing and indignation, so that *men abhorred the offering of the Lord*. But Eli restrained them not, and, as years went on, their wickedness seemed only to increase.

3. *Eli's Warning.* In course of time a man of God stood before Eli, and after sternly rebuking him for honouring his sons above their Maker, announced that instead of the priesthood remaining in his family, it should be transferred to another and more faithful line, and that both his sons should die on one day. But this warning produced no effect. A second warning therefore was now given him, not by any stranger, but by the child whom Hannah had left in the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and who ministered there clad in a white linen ephod, and a little mantle reaching to the feet, which his mother brought him from year to year. One night, when the aged priest had lain down to rest in one of the chambers hard by the Tabernacle, in the early morning before it was yet light, a voice called Samuel, and awoke him. Thinking Eli had called him, he went to enquire the cause. But Eli had not spoken, and bade him lie down again. He did so, and again the Voice pronounced his name. Once more he ran to the bed-side of the High-priest, who as before denied that he had called him, and told him to return to his bed. A third time the Voice pronounced his name, and then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child, and bade him, if he heard it again, reply, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*. Samuel returned to his bed, and when the Voice called to him for the fourth time, answered as he had been bidden, and heard the purport of the mysterious call. Until the sun was up he lay still, and forbore to tell Eli what he had heard. But the High-priest, whose conscience, doubtless, only too surely whispered what it was, bade him hide nothing from him. And then the old man, whose eyes were dim that he could not see, listened while the child told every whit. Death awaited his sons, beggary and desolation his family. *It is the Lord*, was his brief reply, *let Him do what seemeth Him good*; and in the course of time the warning was fulfilled.

4. *Death of Eli.* Meanwhile the Philistines recovering from their recent defeats advanced their forces to Aphek, not far from Jebus, and inflicted on the Israelites a loss of 4000 men. Alarmed at this reverse the Israelites resolved to fetch the Ark and take it into battle, that it might ensure them the victory. The sacred symbol was therefore removed from the Tabernacle, and the two sons of Eli accompanied it to

the field. At first the Philistines were terribly alarmed at its arrival, but resolving to sell their lives dear, again joined battle, and inflicted on their foes a still more disastrous defeat, slaying upwards of 30,000 men, amongst whom were Eli's sons, and succeeding in capturing the Ark. Trembling for its safety Eli sat on his elevated throne by the wayside awaiting tidings of the battle. At even a young Benjamite with his clothes rent and his hair sprinkled with dust rushed into the town. A wail of lamentation instantly arose, for the people saw how the day had gone. Overhearing the noise Eli enquired the cause, and the young man stepped forward to tell him. But no sooner did he mention that the Ark had been taken than the aged priest *fell from his seat backwards, and his neck brake, and he died.* But still another death was to mark that dreadful day. The wife of Phinehas was near to be delivered of her second child, when the news reached her that her husband and her father-in-law were dead, that Israel had been defeated, that the Ark had been taken. She bowed her head, a son was born, and the women standing near tried to cheer her spirits—but in vain—with her last breath she gave the child a name that should recall that fearful day; Call him *ICHABOD*, she said, for the *glory is departed from Israel.*

CHAPTER II.

1. **The Ark in the Temple of Dagon.** The Ark thus captured was now carried by the Philistines in triumph to Ashdod, and placed in the Temple of Dagon. But on the morrow the idol was found lying on its face upon the ground. In vain it was set up in its place again. The next day saw it a second time laid prostrate, and broken, without head or hands. Moreover while a plague of mice destroyed their crops, emerods or piles tormented their bodies. In great alarm, therefore, they removed the ark to Gath, but there too the same plague broke out, and when they thought of removing it to Ekron, the people of that city declared they would not receive it within their walls. The advice of the priests was then asked, and, at their suggestion, the Ark was placed in a new cart, drawn by two milch-kine, which had never been yoked, with a trespass-offering of five golden mice and five golden emerods. Without turning to the right hand or the left the kine took the road to Bethshemesh, a Levitical city situated under the hills of Dan. The people of this place were busy gathering in their wheat when they beheld the Ark, which they had not seen for seven months. Mean-

while the kine stopped not till they had reached the field of Joshua, an inhabitant of the place, where there was a great stone. The Levites thereupon took down the Ark, clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine as a sacrifice to Jehovah. But not content with offering sacrifices the people of the town approached the Ark, and though even the priests were not allowed to touch it, removed the lid and looked into it. For this several were stricken with instant death, and the Ark itself was removed to KIRJATH-JEARIM (*the fields of the wood*, Ps. cxxxii. 6), and placed in the house of the Levite Abinadab.

2. **Victory of Ebenezer.** At this juncture Samuel, now an acknowledged prophet of the Lord, came forward, and convening an assembly of the people at Mizpeh, solemnly warned the Israelites respecting their idolatry. The people acknowledged their guilt, and pouring water upon the ground entered into a solemn covenant to abandon their false gods, and cleave to the worship of Jehovah. Hearing of this assembly, the Philistines collected their forces, and prepared to give them battle. Taking a lamb Samuel offered it as a sacrifice to the Lord, and was thus employed when the Philistines made their onslaught. But at this moment a terrific thunder-storm burst forth accompanied by an earthquake, and the Philistines flying in alarm, were pursued with great slaughter by the victorious Israelites some considerable distance. Then on the very spot, where twenty years before the Philistines had gained their great triumph, Samuel set up a huge stone in memory of his victory, and named it **EBENEZER** (*the stone of help*).

3. **Samuel as Judge.** The effects of this victory were very great. Not only the Philistines but also the Amorites made peace with Israel, and Samuel's office as judge was confirmed. Ramah, his birthplace, was his residence, and thence year after year he went forth in solemn circuit, administering justice at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and advising in any of the troubles of national or domestic life. As years rolled on, and he waxed old, his sons JOEL and ABIAH shared a portion of his judicial functions. But instead of walking in his footsteps, they turned aside after lucre, exacting excessive usury, and perverting judgment.

4. **The Schools of the Prophets.** A new and more advanced period in the history of the nation was at hand, and Samuel did not fail to prepare the people for it. At Ramah, Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, he gathered together **SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS**, where promising youths lived together under a head or leading prophet, whom they called their *Father*,

while they were termed his *sons*. Here they studied the Law of Moses; composed sacred poetry; became skilled in sacred music; preserved and copied historical records, and from the history of God's past dealings with their nation drew forth warning or encouragement for their own generation.

5. **The Desire for a King.** Before long, however, the misconduct of Samuel's sons produced dissatisfaction and a cry for change. Samuel himself was stricken in age. He had been a man of peace. One military success, and one only, had occurred during his life. Now there appeared a need for a military leader. On the west the Philistines had again begun to rise. On the east the Ammonites threatened the cities of Gilead. There was no known general to command the nation's armies, and lead them to the fight. Forgetting that God was their King, and yearning for an earthly prince to rule over them like the nations round, the elders of Israel repaired to Ramah and preferred their request to Samuel. Samuel's feelings were shocked. *The thing displeased him.* He knew well the abuses of such a form of government. But he did not reject the nation's prayer. A true mediator between the old order and the new, he prayed to the Lord for direction in this crisis. That direction was not withheld. Though he had been rightly displeased with the people's request, though they had done worse than reject him, and had rejected God, he was to convene an assembly and describe to them *the manner of the kingdom*. The assembly met, and Samuel faithfully described the abuses common to all oriental monarchies, the despotic rule of the king, and the miseries of the people. But his words fell on unheeding ears. The pomp of a court had too many attractions for the nation. Without a visible king to lead them forth to battle they affected to feel degraded in the eyes of neighbouring peoples. A king they were resolved to have, and Samuel carried back their answer to the Lord, who again bade him hearken to their voice, and promised that their wishes should be met.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Saul anointed King.** The elders of Israel had not long to wait. Shortly after Samuel's return to Ramah he was informed that on the morrow the promised king would be sent to him to be anointed at his hands. On the next day, therefore, as he was on his way to the high place to preside at a sacrificial feast, he met two wayfaring men. One was a man of Benjamin, SAUL the son of Kish, of a noble and handsome mien, and enormous stature, the other was his servant. Together

they had been traversing without success the central region of Palestine in quest of the asses of Saul's father, which had strayed, and had come to ask Samuel's advice. As Saul drew near, the Divine voice assured the prophet that he was the destined king. Samuel, therefore, not only told him that he might lay aside all further anxiety for his father's asses, but invited him to the sacrificial feast, set him in the chiefest place, and bade him partake of a special portion which had been reserved for him. The evening was spent by both at Samuel's house in Ramah, and on the morrow the prophet accompanied his guest some little way from the town, and when they were alone, taking a phial of oil, poured it upon his head, kissed him, and assured him he was chosen by God to be the first king of Israel. To this assurance he added prophetic intimations of certain incidents which would occur on Saul's return homewards, and then the two men parted; each of the predicted incidents came to pass, and God gave the son of Kish *another heart*, and filled him with energy for his new office.

2. **The Assembly at Mizpeh.** The new king having been thus chosen by God, Samuel bade the people repair to Mizpeh, that there in a solemn assembly the sacred lot might still further confirm the Divine choice. The people assembled, and one after another the heads of the tribes passed before Samuel, and the lot fell upon that of Benjamin. Then the lots were cast again, and at length, in a manner that none could dispute, it was shown that Saul was the elected of the Lord. But when search was made for him he was not to be found. Still shrinking from the office, he had concealed himself in the circle of the baggage round the camp at Mizpeh, whence he was brought forth, and a great shout of *Long live the king!* testified to the nation's acceptance of its new ruler. Left to themselves, the people would have stood committed to the new form of government without any conditions. But the prudent Samuel not only expounded to them the laws of the kingdom as laid down in Deut. xvii. 14—20, but committed them to writing, and laid them up in safe keeping before the Lord.

3. **Saul's first victory.** Then the people returned to their homes, and Saul returned to Gibeah. Before long he was called upon to display his talents as a military leader. The Ammonites under their king NAHASH had laid siege to Jabesh-gilead, the people of which place, in their alarm, offered to make a covenant with him, which he declined except on condition that he might put out their right eyes, and so render them unfit to serve in war. In this strait they requested seven days'

respite, and sending messengers to their brethren on the west of Jordan implored their aid. Saul was driving his herd home from the field, when he received news of the danger that threatened Jabesh-gilead. Instantly he slew a yoke of oxen, hewed them in pieces, and sent this war-token through all the tribes. Upwards of 300,000 of Israel and 30,000 of Judah answered the summons, and assembled at Bezek, a spot within a day's march of Jabesh. Thence after a swift night-march they burst upon the Ammonites in the morning watch, and defeated them with enormous loss.

4. *Samuel's Farewell.* This great victory rallied the nation round Saul as one man, and Samuel deemed it a fit occasion to summon the people once more to Gilgal, and there renew the kingdom. Accordingly after the sacrifice of peace-offerings and amidst great rejoicings, Saul, who had been tried and not found wanting, was again inaugurated in his regal functions, while Samuel embraced the opportunity of bidding farewell to the people he had ruled so prudently. After enquiring whether any had a charge of fraud, or oppression, or unfaithfulness to bring against him, and receiving their testimony to the integrity of his whole career, he gave them his parting counsels, and exhorted them to cleave fast to the Lord. Then he called on the Lord to ratify his words with an outward and visible sign. It was the season of wheat-harvest, when thunder and rain seldom or never occurred. But at the word of Samuel the sky became black with clouds, the thunder rolled, and the rain fell, and bore witness to the solemnity of the prophet's warnings, who having thus bidden farewell to the people left the government in the hands of Saul alone.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *Saul's first Sin.* Recovering from their defeat at Ebenezer the Philistines soon began to renew their old hostilities, and when he had reigned two years Saul resolved to confront them in the field. Gathering round him a small army of 3000 men, he placed 1000 under his valiant son JONATHAN, and with the rest took up his position at MICHMASH, about 7 miles north of Jerusalem. After a while Jonathan, in a fit of youthful ardour, fell upon a garrison of the Philistines, and routed it. This was the signal for a general rising of the Philistines, and they swarmed up in vast force through the passes of Benjamin. Saul himself retired to Gilgal, and the people, panic-stricken, began to hide themselves, as in the days of Gideon, in caves and dens, and some even fled across the Jordan. Michmash now fell into the hands of the Philistines, and their oppressions became

intolerable. The Hebrews were not only disarmed, but the very smiths were removed, and they had to go down to their enemies even to get their agricultural instruments sharpened. It was a terrible crisis. Saul sent messengers to Samuel, and he promised to come to Gilgal, and there offer solemn sacrifices, preparatory probably to some fixed plan of action. But the days passed, and still he came not. Left at the head of barely 600 men, and perceiving that the Israelites were dropping off more and more, though the occasion demanded prudence and caution, Saul could not control his impatience. He offered the sacrifices himself, and had scarcely done so, when Samuel came, and rebuked him sternly for his impetuosity, and told him that the kingdom, which might have remained in his family, would be transferred to another.

2. **Jonathan's Exploit.** Meanwhile the Philistines continued their oppressions, and at length Jonathan resolved to strike another blow. Without saying a word to his father, and accompanied by no one but his armour-bearer, he one day suddenly burst upon the Philistine garrison at Michmash, and slew upwards of twenty men. Filled with terror, which was increased by an earthquake which shook the ground, the Philistines fled in all directions. Saul's watchers perceived the rout, and unable to explain the cause of so sudden a movement, the king ordered the high-priest Ahiah to enquire who had left the camp. On hearing it was Jonathan, who was attacking the enemy, he put himself at the head of his 600 followers, and rushed forth against the foe.

3. **Defeat of the Philistines.** On reaching the scene of action he found that a general panic had seized the Philistines, and that the Israelites were rising on all sides against their oppressors. Carried away by the general excitement, Saul pronounced a curse on any man who should taste of food until the evening and the close of the battle. Onwards the pursuers swept, and before long entered a wood bedewed in divers places with the dropping of wild honey. Knowing nothing of his father's curse, Jonathan, spent and weary, put the end of his staff into a honeycomb and refreshed his parched lips. Night drew on, and the host, entirely unable to endure the enforced fast, flew upon the spoil, slew the sheep and oxen, and devoured their flesh with the blood. Hearing of this infraction of the Law, Saul ordered a large stone to be set up as a kind of altar, and, late as it was, desired to continue the pursuit. The High-priest Ahiah suggested that the Divine will should first be consulted, and the king enquired of the Lord whether he should still go on after the Philistines. But no answer was

vouchsafed. Thereupon Saul, suspecting some sin had been committed which prevented a response, bade the lots be cast. The chiefs divided. Saul and Jonathan stood on one side, the people on the other. The lot signified that the sin lay between the king and his son. Again it was cast, and this time Jonathan was taken, and in answer to his father's questions confessed he had taken and eaten a little honey. Saul declared he would abide by his vow, and Jonathan would certainly have been slain, had not the people interfered, and declared that not one hair of his head should fall to the ground. The king dared not confront the general will, and so Jonathan was saved, and the great victory was achieved.

4. **Saul's second sin.** After this signal defeat of his foes, Saul himself assumed the offensive, and carried on successful wars against Moab, Ammon, Edom, and even the king of Zobah, a region east of Coele-syria and extending towards the Euphrates. While in the full tide of his success he received a visit from Samuel, who bade him from God undertake an expedition against the Amalekites, and avenge the treacherous hostility which they had shewn towards the Israelites, when they came forth from Egypt (Exod. xvii. 8, 14. Num. xxiv. 20). *Smite Amalek, ran the Divine commission, spare them not; slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, oxen and sheep, camel and ass.* Thereupon Saul mustered his forces at Telaim in southern Judah, and attacking the Amalekites smote them from Havilah to Shur. All the *people* he utterly destroyed, but, contrary to the express orders he had received, spared the *best* of the spoil and Agag the Amalekite king. Then having set up a monument of his victory at Carmel in Judah, he returned to Gilgal. There, however, he was soon confronted once again with the prophet Samuel, who enquired what *the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen* on all sides meant? Thus addressed the king tried to throw the blame upon the people, and declared that *they* had spared the best of the spoil to offer in sacrifice to Jehovah. But the prophet was not to be thus deceived. Sternly he rebuked the king for his unfaithfulness, and once more declared that the kingdom should not remain in his family, but should be given to a neighbour who was better than he. In deep contrition Saul now confessed his error, and implored Samuel to offer sacrifice with him. The prophet yielded, and having ordered Agag to be brought before him, caused him to be hewn in pieces before the Lord, and returned to Ramah to mourn for one, whose career, once so bright, was now obscured with such dark clouds.

5. **The Anointing of David.** Shortly after this Samuel

was bidden to take a horn of oil and go to BETHLEHEM, there to anoint another king. Samuel went, and taking with him a heifer for a sacrificial feast, ascended the long hill leading up to Bethlehem. The elders of the town saw him approaching, and in fear and trembling enquired, *Comest thou peaceably?* *Peaceably*, was the reply, and they were bidden to follow him to the feast. Among the guests was an aged man, the father of eight sons, by name JESSE, the son of OBED, and grandson of RUTH. Seven of these were now present with him, and while they were waiting to sit down, Samuel beheld the old man's eldest son ELIAB, a tall and handsome youth, and thought that truly this was the Lord's anointed. But the Divine Voice intimated to him that this was not so. Then the second son, ABINADAB, the third SHAMMAH, and after them four other sons, passed before him, but the Lord had not chosen them. Thereupon Samuel enquired whether all Jesse's sons were present, and ascertaining that the youngest, DAVID, was absent keeping the sheep, he ordered him to be fetched, nor would he suffer the feast to begin till he appeared. Accordingly a messenger was sent, and soon DAVID stood before the prophet, with his shepherd's staff in his hand, a mere stripling beside the tall Eliab, ruddy, bright-eyed, *comely, and good to look to*. *Arise, anoint him, for this is he*, whispered the Divine Voice, and Samuel poured upon his head the holy oil in the midst of the assembled guests, and after the feast returned to Ramah.

6. **David at Saul's Court.** Meanwhile Saul became moody, and liable to sudden fits of frenzy. The Spirit of God, which came upon David more and more, departed from him, and *an evil spirit troubled him*. To soothe his malady his servants advised that a skilful player on the harp should be sought, and on enquiry being made, the name of David was mentioned as a cunning minstrel and of tried valour. Thereupon Saul sent for him, and his troubled spirit owned the sweet influence of the future Psalmist of Israel; he loved David, and made him not only his minstrel but his armour-bearer. When the paroxysms of the royal malady were abated, David returned to Bethlehem, and became celebrated for his strength and courage. Once a lion, and at another time a bear, attacked his father's flock; thereupon he fled not like a hireling shepherd, but put his life in his hand, went after them, and slew them.

7. **David and Goliath.** Before long the ever active Philistines again rose in arms against the Israelites, and a giant, named GOLIATH of Gath, of enormous height, and clad in complete armour, came forth, and openly defied any one of the Hebrew host to mortal combat. Even the tall majestic Saul declined

the challenge, and, like his people, *was dismayed, and greatly afraid*. One day, having been sent by his father to see how his brethren fared, David entered the Hebrew camp, and heard the loud voice of the giant challenging the Israelites to the combat. Marvelling that none dared to go forth and meet him, and heeding not the taunts of his brother Eliab, who bade him return and mind his sheep on the downs of Bethlehem, David declared he was ready to encounter the giant. His words were reported to Saul, and he was summoned into the royal presence. Not recognizing his former minstrel, owing perhaps to his altered visage, the king would have armed David with his own armour. But when it was tried it did not fit him, and David went forth to meet the Philistine, armed only with a sling and five smooth stones he had chosen as he walked across the ravine. Enraged at the youthful appearance of his assailant, the giant cursed him by his gods, and threatened to give his flesh to *the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field*. David boldly returned threat for threat, and putting his hand into his bag, drew thence a stone which he slang with all his might, and smote the Philistine in the forehead, so that he fell upon his face to the earth. Then without delay he drew the giant's sword from its sheath and cut off his head. The sight of their champion lying weltering in his blood filled the Philistines with consternation, and they commenced a precipitate flight, hotly pursued by the Israelites, who chased them to the gates of Ekron and Gath, and spoiled their tents. On their return, the youthful warrior, who had in so striking a manner proved that *the Lord saved not with sword or spear*, bearing the head of his enemy in his hand, was conducted to Saul's tent by Abner the king's uncle and captain of the host, and from this time Saul took him permanently into his service, and would let him no more return to his father's house.

CHAPTER V.

1. **Saul's jealousy of David.** The victory over Goliath was the turning-point in David's life. No longer the obscure shepherd of Bethlehem, but the deliverer of Israel, and the chief of Saul's men of war, he became the devoted ally of Jonathan, the king's son, and the two ratified a vow of undying friendship. But the hour of his triumph was the signal for the beginning of that fatal jealousy with which Saul henceforth regarded him. As the royal party returned from the late battle, companies of Hebrew maidens sung that *Saul had slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands*. To the king this was gall and wormwood. In the youthful warrior he saw that other

more worthy than himself, of whom Samuel had spoken, and *he eyed him from that day and forward*. More than once as David played before him on his harp he flung at him the long spear he held in his hand, and would have pinned him to the wall, had he not escaped out of his presence. More than once too he sent him on warlike expeditions against the Philistines, hoping he might fall in battle, and though he gave him his daughter MICHAL in marriage, and made him captain of the royal body-guard, he did not scruple to suggest that he should be put out of the way, and was only dissuaded by the intercession of Jonathan himself.

2. *David flies to Naioth.* At length having been preserved from death only by the devotion of his wife Michal, who deceived the officers charged to slay him by placing in his bed an image enveloped in a net of goat's hair, and let him down from a window, David fled away to Naioth (*huts or habitations*) near Ramah. Here he once more met the prophet Samuel, and, probably NATHAN and GAD. News of his hiding-place reaching Saul, the king went after him, but on drawing near to Naioth was so affected by the sacred strains of the prophets, that he could not resist the prophetic impulse, so that men said, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* Though the danger was thus for the time averted, David saw that there was *but a step between him and death*, and in a secret interview with Jonathan besought him to ascertain the real feelings of the king. Jonathan assented, and it was agreed that within three days he should rejoin David, conveying his bow and arrows and accompanied by a little lad. He would then shoot three arrows, and if he said in David's hearing to the lad, *Behold the arrows are on this side of thee*, take them, then David might know that all was well. If he said, *The arrows are beyond thee*, then he might know that the wrath of the king could not be appeased. The day came. David repaired to his hiding-place, and Jonathan came with the lad. The three arrows were shot, and as he ran to pick them up, Jonathan said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?* Then David knew that he must fly, and after a sad parting with his friend, he betook himself to Nob.

3. *David at Adullam.* Nob was a sacerdotal city, situated on an eminence near Jerusalem. Here the high-priest Ahimelech resided with the Tabernacle, and trembled when he saw David approaching alone, unattended even by his usual retinue. But David disarmed his suspicions by pretending he was sent on a secret mission from the king, and obtained some of the shewbread and the sword of Goliath. With these he fled away to the court of Achish, king of Gath, and being recognized

as the famous champion of Israel was thrown into prison, where by scrabbling on the doors, and letting his spittle fall upon his beard, he made all think he was mad, and the oriental respect for madness procured his release. Hence he fled to the town of Adullam, at the foot of the Judæan hills, and found a secure retreat in one of the extensive caves which abounded in the neighbourhood. News of his coming reached Bethlehem, and straightway his brethren and all his father's house, and his nephews, JOAB, ABISHAI, and ASAHAI, came down to his stronghold. But besides these soon appeared 400 men, who joined him from various motives, some from distress, others to avoid exacting creditors, others from some private misfortune. Not considering, however, his father and mother safe even here, David hastily conveyed them across the Jordan, and placed them under the protection of the king of Moab. Other bands soon joined him. Amongst these were eleven mighty men from the uplands of Gad beyond Jordan, who swam that river in flood-time, and found their way to his hold. After them came men not only of the tribe of Judah, but even of Saul's own tribe of Benjamin, headed by their chief Amasai.

4. *Saul's Massacre of the Priests.* By the advice of the prophet Gad David now left Adullam for the forest of Hareth, and afterwards for Keilah, which he wrested from the Philistines. While in this neighbourhood he was joined by Abiathar, the son of the high-priest Ahimelech, bearing disastrous news. On the day of David's visit to Nob, a stranger, DOEG, an Edomite, and the chief of Saul's herdsmen, had been intently watching all that took place. He had poured into Saul's ear his version of what had occurred, and the king filled with rage instantly sent for Ahimelech, and all the priests of the house of Ithamar, and charged them with befriending David. In vain Ahimelech denied the charge; Saul ordered that all the priests should be put to death; and when his own body-guard declined to embrace their hands in their blood, Doeg fell upon them, and slew upwards of *fourscore and five persons, which did wear a linen ephod*. Not content with this, the king next put the entire population of Nob to the sword, slaying *both men and women, children and sucklings*. Such was the sad news Abiathar now brought to David, who replied, *I knew it, that day that Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul; I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house*. The presence, however, of Abiathar, who had brought with him the sacred ephod, was of great service to David, and he was enabled to ascertain the Divine will on many occasions of difficulty and danger. Being thus warned on the present occasion that the

people of Keilah intended to surrender him to Saul, who had marched thither with all his forces, he removed with his followers to a stronghold in the wilderness of Ziph, in the highlands of Judah between Carmel and Juttah.

5. *David spares Saul's life.* Hither, however, he was also pursued by Saul with ceaseless zeal, and on one occasion so close were the pursuer and the pursued on one another's track, that while David was climbing down one side of a cliff, Saul and his men were posted to intercept them on the other, and David was only saved by the sudden arrival of a messenger, who announced to the king a sudden inroad of the Philistines, and obliged him to discontinue the pursuit. ENGEDI, or *the Spring of the Wild Goats*, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, was David's next hiding-place, and hither, the panic of the Philistine invasion over, Saul pursued him at the head of 3000 men. On one occasion the king entered a cave where David and his men, seeing but not seen, were also concealed. Had he listened to his own men, David would now have put Saul to death. But he contented himself with cutting off the skirt of the royal robe. Even for this his heart smote him, and when Saul left the cave he cried after him, *My Lord the King!* Saul looked behind him, and listened while David in pathetic words pleaded his own cause, and in the skirt of his robe bade the king see a proof of his unwillingness to injure him. Even Saul was deeply moved, acknowledged the generosity of his rival, and implored David, when he should come to the throne, to spare his posterity, which David undertook to do.

6. *Nabal and Abigail.* About this time Samuel died, and was committed to the grave in his house at Ramah, amidst the lamentation of the whole nation. Meanwhile David did not leave his stronghold at Engedi. On the neighbouring mountain range of Carmel dwelt a rich sheep-master named NABAL, to whom David's men rendered much help in safely keeping in these troublous times his 3000 sheep and 1000 goats. Hearing that Nabal was about to shear his sheep, an occasion of much festivity, David sent ten men to request a small reward for the services he had rendered him. This Nabal flatly and insultingly refused, and David at the head of 400 men marched to Carmel, and would have inflicted summary vengeance, had it not been for the interposition of Nabal's wife ABIGAIL. Informed of her lord's uncivil conduct, she came forth with a plentiful supply of provisions to meet David, and turned away his wrath, frankly allowing that as for her husband, NABAL (*fool*) was his name, and folly was with him. Returning home she found her

husband drinking to excess at the feast, and informed him next morning of the risk he had run, on which he was seized with a fit, and died in ten days. Thereupon David married Abigail, and besides her espoused Ahinoam of Jezreel in southern Judah.

7. **David again spares Saul's life.** From Engedi David once more repaired to the wilderness of Ziph, and again, having discovered his hiding place, Saul set out at the head of 3000 men to capture him, and pitched his tent with Abner and his forces round about him. With his nephew Abishai David penetrated through the lines in the dead of night to the spot where the king lay, his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster. Again Abishai bade him take advantage of the opportunity. But David stayed his hand, and contented himself with taking Saul's spear, and the cruse of water by his bolster, with which he ascended to the summit of a neighbouring hill, and called aloud in the stillness of the night to Abner. Abner awoke, and David reproached him for the little care he had taken of his master, and showed him the royal spear and the cruse of water. Soon Saul also was aroused, recognized David's voice, and acknowledged with admiration his rival's magnanimity.

8. **David a second time at Gath.** Convinced that Saul's feelings towards himself had undergone no permanent change, David resolved to repair once more into the land of the Philistines, and at the head of his 600 followers presented himself before Achish the king of Gath. The Philistine king assigned him the town of Ziklag for his abode, and here David dwelt for sixteen months, and led successful expeditions against neighbouring tribes. Before long the Philistines gathered together all their forces for another struggle with the Israelites, and Achish and his contingent prepared to take part in the expedition. As his vassal, David also consented to join him with his 600 men, but the other Philistine chiefs protested against his accompanying them, and David was fain to return to Ziklag. On reaching this place he found it in ruins. During his absence the Amalekites had burst upon it and burnt it to the ground, and carried off David's wives, and those of his men. After ascertaining the Divine will, David straightway pursued after them, defeated them with great slaughter, and captured enormous spoils, which he divided amongst his followers and many friendly towns which had aided him during his wanderings.

9. **Saul and the Witch of Endor.** Meanwhile the Philistines pressed on in dense array towards the plain of Jezreel, and pitched by Shunem on the southern slope of the range of

Little Hermon, while Saul encamped his forces on the opposite range of Mount Gilboa. As he beheld his foes passing on by hundreds and thousands, the Israelite king was filled with the utmost alarm. He had none to advise or counsel him. He was utterly alone. Samuel was dead, he had murdered all the priests, and when he inquired of the Lord, *He answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.* In this terrible crisis, he resolved to consult a woman *that had a familiar spirit*, and disguising himself set out with two attendants under cover of night for a dark and gloomy cavern at Endor, about seven or eight miles distant. Crossing a shoulder of the very ridge where the Philistines were entrenched, they reached the cave, and Saul informed the woman of his desire to have an interview with the prophet Samuel. At first she hesitated lest the king, who in better days had been zealous against magic and sorcery, should hear of it. But Saul calmed her fears, and she exercised her arts, and the awful form of Samuel, *an old man and covered with a mantle*, appeared. To him Saul poured forth the tale of his deep distress, but in reply the prophet could only inform him that the Day of Doom was near. *To-morrow*, said he, *shalt thou and thy sons be with me.* Utterly prostrated by this awful announcement the king *fell in the fulness of his stature all along upon the earth*, and having with difficulty been persuaded to partake of food, rose up, and re-crossing the ridge reached the heights of Gilboa.

10. *Battle of Mount Gilboa.* The next morning broke, and the Philistines made their onset. The unhappy king with his doom upon him could do little in such a crisis. His army was speedily routed, and as it fled before the enemy, numbers were slain upon the heights. The Philistine archers pursued hard after Saul and his sons; three of the latter were slain outright, including the valiant Jonathan; Saul himself was wounded, and when his armour-bearer refused to slay him, fell upon his own sword and expired. The rout was complete, and extended to the tribes beyond the Jordan. Even here the Israelites fled from their cities *and the Philistines dwelt in them.* Next morning the bodies of Saul and his three sons were found by the Philistines, when they came to strip the slain. With savage glee they cut off his head, stripped him of his armour, and sent it as a trophy into their own land. Then they fastened his body and those of his three sons to the wall overhanging the open space in front of Beth-shan. On the east of Jordan and in full view of Beth-shan was the town of Jabesh-Gilead, which Saul had relieved in the early part of his reign. Mindful of this the inhabitants crossed the Jordan, and

under cover of night took down the bodies of the king and his sons from the wall, and buried them under an oak of their own town. News of this disastrous battle was brought to David at Ziklag by a young Amalekite, who had been present, and who now brought with him Saul's crown and the bracelet that was upon his arm, and pretended to have slain him at his own request. He deemed himself certain of a reward for such services, but David ordered his young men to put him to death on the spot, and then forgetting all that had passed between them burst into a strain of passionate lamentation over Saul, while towards Jonathan his whole soul gushed forth in expressions of tenderest affection.

BOOK VIII.

The Reigns of David and Solomon.

CHAPTER I.

1. **David removes to Hebron.** The hour which the prophet of Ramah had long ago foretold was now come. In this great crisis of the nation's history there was none left, save David only, to whom the Israelites could look for guidance. By the Divine direction, therefore, he removed with his wives and his faithful followers to Hebron, and there the men of Judah anointed him as their king. His first act after his accession was to thank the men of Jabesh-Gilead for their bravery in removing the corpses of Saul and his sons from the walls of Beth-shan.

2. **The Rival Kingdom of Ishbosheth.** Of the family of the late king there remained at this time only his youngest son ISHBOSHETH, and MEPHIBOSHETH, the son of Jonathan, a child but five years old. Ishbosheth ascended the throne, and under the protection of his kinsman the powerful Abner established his capital at MAHANAIM, on the east of the Jordan, and ruled over all Israel, excepting only the tribe of Judah, which remained faithful to David. The first of many skirmishes between the forces of the two kings took place at Gibeon, whither Abner had led his troops to confront those led by David's nephews, JOAB, ABISHAI, and ASAHIEL. By mutual agreement twelve picked champions from either side engaged in mortal combat, and all fell dead together on a spot henceforth called Helkath-hazzurim, *the Field of Heroes*. This brought on a general engagement, in which the forces of Ishbosheth were utterly routed.

3. **Death of Asahel.** Even Abner himself was fain to fly, and was hotly pursued by Asahel, the youngest of David's

nephews. Abner recognized his fleet pursuer, and advised him to desist from the pursuit. But the youth pressed on, and Abner turning back thrust him through with his spear. The sight of his bleeding corpse lying in the middle of the wood filled Joab and Abishai with fury, and they pursued after Abner. But the men of Benjamin rallying round him, Joab was induced to sound the signal for a cessation of the pursuit, and drawing off his men, conveyed his brother's body to Bethlehem, while Abner returned to Mahanaim. A series of petty wars now ensued, in which *David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.*

4. **Murder of Abner.** At length a fatal quarrel broke out between Abner and Ishbosheth. Abner had married Rizpah a daughter of Aiah, and a concubine of Saul. This Ishbosheth resented, and after hot words Abner went over to David, who agreed to receive him at Hebron, if his former wife Michal was restored to him. Michal was brought back, and Abner with twenty men came to David at Hebron, and after a feast he departed with the avowed intention of *gathering all Israel unto his lord the king.* Returning from a foray, Joab heard how Abner had been received by David, and furious against his brother's murderer sent messengers to ask him to return to Hebron. Abner returned, suspecting nothing, and at the entry of the gate Joab stabbed him to death. News of this cruel murder roused David's utmost indignation. Unable to punish his powerful nephew, he pronounced fearful curses on his family, and compelled him to follow the bier of his victim robed in sackcloth, while he himself poured forth a solemn dirge.

5. **Death of Ishbosheth.** Ishbosheth did not long survive his kinsman's murder. Two divisions of his body-guard were commanded by BAANAH and RECHAB, natives of the Canaanite town of Beeroth. In revenge for some injury they had received, and hoping to win the approval of David, they entered the palace of Ishbosheth under pretence of fetching away some wheat, and finding him lying on his bed stabbed him to the heart and cut off his head. But on presenting themselves before David at Hebron, they met with no better reception than the pretended slayer of Saul. David sternly rebuked them for the cold-blooded murder, ordered their instant execution, and placed the head of Ishbosheth with all honours in the sepulchre of Abner.

CHAPTER II.

1. **David king of the entire nation.** His rival being thus put out of the way, there was nothing to prevent David becoming king of all Israel. Accordingly after he had reigned

seven years at Hebron, a deputation from all the tribes repaired thither and formally offered him the crown. A solemn league was then entered into, and for the third time David was anointed with great rejoicings. Every tribe in Israel rallied round him, and upwards of 300,000 chosen warriors joined in celebrating the three days' festival which greeted his accession.

2. **Capture of Jerusalem.** His first act after his coronation was very significant. Saul had been content with the obscurity of his native Gibeah, and had cared little for any central point of union for the tribes. David resolved to give the nation a new capital, and for this purpose to reduce the impregnable stronghold of JEBUS. The warriors of Judah had once taken the lower city (Judg. i. 8), but the fortress had never been reduced. The presence of so many chosen troops from all the tribes seemed favourable for making an attempt, and, as before, the lower city was easily captured, but again the fortress held out against every attack. So impregnable, indeed, did the Jebusites believe their stronghold to be, that they merely manned its walls with *lame and blind* men, deeming them amply sufficient for the defence. Stung by their taunts, David promised that whoso first scaled the precipitous heights on which it rose, should be commander of all his forces. Thereupon the agile JOAB climbed up first, the place was captured, and he received the promised reward.

3. **Removal of the Ark.** The news that the celebrated stronghold of the Jebusites had become *the city of David* had a powerful effect on the surrounding nations. HIRAM, king of Phœnicia, instantly dispatched messengers with offers of artificers and materials for constructing a palace, which was accordingly built, and hither David removed his numerous household. The Philistines, on the other hand, made two distinct attempts to crush the new king, but their numerous forces were completely routed. David's next care was to remove the Ark to his new capital, and 30,000 from all Israel went to Kirjath-jearim to escort it on its way. The sacred symbol was placed in a new cart drawn by oxen, and preceded by UZZAH and AHIO the sons of the Levite Abinadab, was escorted amidst great rejoicings to Jerusalem. But on reaching the threshingfloor of Chidon or Nachon (1 Chr. xiii. 9) the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah put forth his hand to hold the ark. In a moment he fell dead, and it was resolved for the present to make no further attempt to move it. Accordingly it was carried to the house of OBED-EDOM, the Gittite, i.e. probably a native of *Gath-Rimmon*, a Levitical town in the tribe of Dan, where

it remained three months. Meanwhile David had prepared a new Tabernacle at Jerusalem, and hearing that the presence of the Ark had brought a blessing on the house of Obed-edom, he assembled the Levites, and bade ZADOK and ABIATHAR, the two chiefs of the house of Aaron, prepare for its removal. Accordingly solemn purifications, neglected before, were now performed, the staves were passed through the rings of the Ark, and amidst shoutings and the joyful sounds of all kinds of music, it was borne in solemn procession towards Jerusalem. David himself headed the long array, clad in a linen ephod, playing on a stringed instrument, and accompanying the music with leaping and dancing. At length the city was reached. The gates of the ancient fortress *lifted up their heads* (Ps. xxiv. 8, 9), and the sacred symbol of the presence of the *King of glory* entered in, and was placed within the awnings of the new Tabernacle. A series of sacrifices were then offered up, and the king blessed the people, and dismissed them to their homes with ample presents.

CHAPTER III.

1. **David's Army.** The reception of the Ark within the folds of the Tabernacle awoke in David a desire to build a more ample and enduring *Temple for Jehovah*. But the prophet NATHAN was bidden to tell him that, as *he was a man of war and blood*, so peaceful a work would be better reserved for another. He assured him, however, that the mercy of the Lord should not be taken from him, as it had been from Saul, and that a son of his own should carry on his work. David, therefore, now began by a series of conquests to extend his power and to found a dominion realizing the prophetic description contained in the Promise made to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18—21). For this purpose he re-organized the army, divided the national forces into twelve divisions of 24,000 men, over which JOAB was commander-in-chief; established a royal body-guard, which he placed under BENAIAH, the son of Jehoiada, and a military order, called the GIBBORIM, *Heroes or Mighty Men*, at the head of which was ABISHAI his nephew.

2. **David's Conquests.** Having made these arrangements, within ten years after the reduction of Jerusalem, he was enabled to push his conquests far and wide, (i) subduing the Philistines and capturing Gath; (ii) establishing garrisons in Edom and making himself master of the eastern arm of the Red Sea and the caravan routes to Arabia; (iii) vanquishing Haddadzer, king of Zobah; (iv) defeating and reducing to tribute the Moabites, and destroying their capital, AR or Rabbath.

3. **Campaign against the Ammonites.** It was from the Ammonites, however, that the royal arms experienced the greatest resistance. Resenting an indignity offered to his ambassadors by HANUN, the Ammonite king, David directed Joab to exact summary vengeance. Meanwhile the Ammonites had concluded an alliance with the Syrians of Beth-rehob and Zobah, and entrenched themselves in RABBAH, their capital. Perceiving that he was confronted by two armies, Joab assigned to his brother Abishai the duty of assaulting the Ammonites, while he himself attacked the Syrians. The latter were speedily routed, and the Ammonites fled to their citadel. Before long the Syrians roused their kindred beyond the Euphrates, and an enormous force marched out against Joab. In this crisis, David deemed it necessary that he should put himself at the head of the army, and crossing the Jordan, defeated the Syrians with great slaughter. The following spring the siege of Rabbah was resumed, and Joab at the head not only of the troops of Judah, but of Ephraim and Benjamin, with the Ark and its Levitical guard in the midst of his army, strained every nerve to reduce the Ammonite capital.

4. **David's Sin.** Meanwhile, critical as was the nature of the campaign, David, who had returned to Jerusalem, lingered there, instead of accompanying his forces in the field, and now wrought that deed of shame, which has left so dark a blot upon his character. One day, on rising from his afternoon repose, he saw from the roof of his palace a woman of extraordinary beauty, BATHSHEBA, the daughter of Eliam or Ammiel, the wife of URIAH, the Hittite, one of his bravest generals, now serving before Rabbah. Though her husband was one of his most trusted officers, David did not scruple to send for Bathsheba, and committed adultery with her. Then, as time went on, and he found it impossible to conceal the proofs of his guilt, he sent a letter to Joab bidding him expose Uriah in the thickest of the fight, and ensure his death. Joab did as he was told, and Uriah was slain, whereupon David sent for Bathsheba, and she became his wife.

5. **David's Punishment.** But though David had done all this secretly, God had watched every step in the dreadful crime, and now punishment appeared at the door. The prophet Nathan was sent to him, and, in the well-known parable of the *Rich man and the Poor man's ewe lamb*, awoke the conscience of his sovereign to the heinousness of his sin, and denounced the penalty; evil was to rise up against him out of his own family, and *the sword should never depart from his house*. David acknowledged the justice of the sentence, and was told that the

Lord had put away his sin, but judgment soon began, and the child which Uriah's wife bore to him died. In the course of time, however, a second son was born to him, whom Nathan named *JEDIDIAH, beloved of the Lord*, but David called him *SOLOMON, the peaceful one*. Meanwhile Joab had been pushing forward the siege of Rabbah, and having succeeded in capturing the lower town, sent messengers to David bidding him come himself, unless he wished him to capture it and call it after his own name. On this David set out, and the fortress having been speedily reduced, the inhabitants were treated with the utmost rigour, and wearing the royal crown of Ammon David and his army returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *Troubles in David's Family.* The reduction of Rabbah was the last of David's conquests, and his kingdom had now reached the limits foretold to the patriarch Abraham. But from this time dark clouds began to gather round him, the doom pronounced by the prophet found its fulfilment, and out of his own household came the instruments of his punishment. First his daughter TAMAR was outraged by her half-brother AMNON. Two years afterwards Amnon was slain by Tamar's own brother ABSALOM, who then, fearful of David's anger, fled to the court of his father-in-law Talmai, king of Geshur.

2. *Absalom's Plot.* For three years he remained in this retreat, and then through the interposition of Joab was restored and reconciled to the king. But the ungrateful son had no sooner returned to Jerusalem than he began to plot against his father. Having surrounded himself with a small body-guard, he managed to ingratiate himself with the people, and under pretence of a vow obtained permission to go to Hebron. Here he was joined by 200 men of the chief families at Jerusalem, and especially by AHITHOPHEL, the Gilonite, the *familiar friend and counsellor* of his father, and the revolt began.

3. *David's Flight.* No sooner did news of the rebellion reach the ears of David, than without striking a single blow in defence of his crown, he left Jerusalem with the royal body-guard and a vast concourse of the people, and crossing the Kidron made towards the Jordan. As he descended the slopes of Olivet he met Hushai, *the king's friend*, with torn robe and dust upon his head, and persuaded him to return to Jerusalem, there to feign devotion to Absalom and counteract the counsels of Ahithophel. Hushai accordingly turned back, and saluted Absalom, and was admitted into his counsels. Ahithophel now advised that a pursuit after David should be instantly

set on foot while yet he was weary and weakhanded, and felt sure that if once he was slain, the whole people would side with Absalom. The counsel found favour with the usurper, but first he resolved to call in Hushai and ask his opinion. Hushai pronounced the plan extremely dangerous. An attack upon the king could only be made at a great risk. He, therefore, advised delay, and the assembling of all the national forces. His counsel was adopted, and Ahithophel foreseeing the certain issue *put his household in order and hanged himself.*

4. **David at Mahanaim.** Meanwhile David and his retinue had been pressing on towards the Jordan, and had there halted when the two sons of Zadok and Abiathar arrived in breathless haste, bidding him from Hushai cross the river without a moment's delay. At midnight therefore he arose, crossed the Jordan, and establishing his head-quarters at Mahanaim, the former capital of Ishbosheth, mustered his forces and placed them under the command of Joab and Abishai, receiving supplies from several stanch and wealthy friends.

5. **The Battle.** Absalom also had mustered his forces, and having placed them under the command of AMASA, he too crossed the Jordan. The engagement was not long delayed. It took place in a dense forest, not far from Mahanaim, and resulted in the complete defeat of Absalom's army. Amidst the crowd of fugitives Absalom himself fled upon his mule, and his long hair catching in an oak, he hung suspended from the tree. David had enjoined his captains to *deal tenderly with the young man.* But Joab no sooner heard in what plight he was, than he pierced him through with three darts, and flung his corpse into a great pit. With the death of the usurper the rebellion came to an end. But on hearing the news of the death of his favourite son David gave way to the most violent grief, and was so incensed against Joab, that he vowed to make Amasa commander-in-chief in his stead. At length he was roused from his deep sorrow, and commenced his return to Jerusalem. Every step in his progress was marked by forgiveness; Shimei, a Benjamite, who had cursed him as he descended the slopes of Olivet, was pardoned; and all his friends were rewarded with ample gifts.

CHAPTER V.

1. **David numbers the People.** Encouraged by the intestine feuds of the Israelites the Philistines, shortly after David's restoration, made an effort to regain a portion of their ancient supremacy. But the valour of the king and of his captains thwarted all their designs, and rendered the attempt useless.

David's kingdom was now strongly established, and with its court, its palace, and its tributaries, resembled one of the kingdoms of the world. In this hour of his prosperity the monarch was tempted to direct a general census of the people, for the purpose probably of forming an army with a view to foreign conquests. Even Joab disapproved of the design, but seeing the king bent upon it set out, and after the lapse of nine months and twenty days reported 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah as fit for military service.

2. **The Three Days' Pestilence.** But before his return David's heart had smitten him, and Gad the seer now offered him from the Lord the choice of seven years' famine, or three months' defeat before his enemies, or a three days' pestilence. David chose the last, and the plague swept off upwards of 70,000 of his subjects. But when the hand of the destroying Angel was lifted up over Jerusalem, at the intercession of the king he was bidden to desist, when near the threshing-floor of Ornan or Araunah, a wealthy Jebusite. Thereupon David bought the site of the threshing-floor, erected an altar, offered sacrifices, and fire descending from heaven attested their acceptance and the cessation of the plague.

3. **Rebellion of Adonijah.** The remaining years of David's life were spent in amassing materials for the erection of the Temple. But even now his domestic happiness was sorely troubled. His three eldest sons being dead, the fourth, ADONIJAH, resolved to claim the kingdom. Like Absalom he surrounded himself with a body-guard, and drew over the high-priest Abiathar and Joab himself to his side. While, however, the conspirators were celebrating a great feast near En-rogel, south of Jerusalem, Nathan, the prophet, persuaded Bathsheba to inform David of what was going on. Bathsheba did so, and the king instantly summoned Zadok and Benaiah, and bade them together with Nathan solemnly proclaim SOLOMON his successor, and anoint him with the sacred oil. Solomon, therefore, was escorted by them in state to Gihon, and having been there anointed was conducted back amidst great rejoicings through the city, and sat down on his father's throne. The noise of the shouting reached the ears of the conspirators at En-rogel, and ascertaining what it was they fled in different directions, while Adonijah laid hold on the horns of the Brazen Altar before the Tabernacle, and refused to leave the spot till Solomon had assured him of safety so long as he showed himself a worthy man.

4. **Death of David.** By this time David's life was rapidly drawing to a close. Convening a public assembly, he solemnly exhorted the new king, in the presence of the people, to con-

stancy to Jehovah, bade him see to the construction of the Temple, and committed to his charge all the materials and treasures he had amassed. Then amidst great sacrifices and feasting, Solomon was for the second time anointed, and received the formal homage of the other princes and the chiefs of the nation. Shortly after which *in a good old age, full of years, riches, and honour*, the son of Jesse, the Shepherd, the Warrior, the King, the Psalmist, was gathered to his people, B.C. 1015, having reigned seven-and-a-half years at Hebron, and thirty-three at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Second Rebellion of Adonijah.** The new king was hardly seated on the throne, before Adonijah entreated Bathsheba to intercede with Solomon in obtaining for him in marriage ABISHAG the Shunammite, his father's latest wife. Solomon saw in this request a design upon the throne, and ordered Benaiah to put Adonijah to death, and at the same time, suspecting ABIATHAR to be concerned in the plot, degraded him from his office, and caused Joab to be slain at the horns of the altar, whither he had fled for refuge. BENAIAH now became commander-in-chief, and ZADOK high-priest.

2. **Solomon's Choice.** Shortly after this, Solomon convened a solemn assembly at Gibeon, and offered numerous sacrifices. During the following night, the Lord appeared to him in vision and bade him prefer any petition he desired. As yet *humble in his own sight*, and impressed with the greatness of his office, the young king prayed not for riches, or honours, or long life, or for the life of his enemies, but for a wise and understanding heart, that he might know how to rule his people. His prayer pleased the Lord, and because he had requested nothing for himself, He assured him that all the things he had not asked should be added unto him, if he, for his part, took care to walk in the steps of his father, and observe the Divine statutes and commandments.

3. **Solomon's Judgment.** Very shortly after his accession, Solomon was called upon to give proof of that sagacity in judicial cases so much prized in the east. Two women inhabited one house together, and each had an infant child. The mother of one overlaid hers while she slept, and rising at midnight, laid it in the bosom of the other woman, taking her live child in its place. In the morning the other found out the fraud, and demanded the living infant. This being refused, and the other claiming it as her own, both of them appealed to Solomon, who ordered the living child to be di-

vided in two halves, one of which should be given to each. The anguish of the real, and the cruel indifference of the pretended mother decided the point in a moment, and proved the sagacity of the king. Besides judicial wisdom Solomon was eminent for acquaintance with all the knowledge of his age. He spake 3000 proverbs, of which a great number survive in the "Book of Proverbs," and his songs, of which the "Song of Songs" alone remains, were *a thousand and five*; he spake also of trees, *from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth out of the wall.*

4. *The Building of the Temple.* Mindful of the commands of his father, Solomon now sent to HIRAM, king of Phœnicia, requesting the aid of Sidonian artificers and a supply of cedar-wood for the construction of the Temple. Hiram readily complied, and undertook to float cedar-trees and fir-trees to Joppa, on condition that Solomon sent him yearly 20,000 cors of wheat and 20 cors of oil. For the purpose of felling the timber a levy of 30,000 Israelites was made, of whom 10,000 were employed at a time, spending a month in the mountains of Lebanon, and two months in their own homes. Besides these, 70,000 were employed as porters, and 80,000 slaves, remnants of the Canaanites, as hewers in the quarries near Jerusalem. At length, after three years of preparation, in the 4th year of Solomon's reign, and the 480th after the departure from Egypt, the foundations were laid on the site of the threshingfloor of Araunah, where the plague was stayed. Every beam already cut and squared, every stone already hewn and bevelled, was laid silently in its appointed place, and

Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.

5. *Its Form.* Within a quadrangle formed by a solid wall was an open court, afterwards known as the *Court of the Gentiles*. Within this, on a higher level, was the *Court of the Israelites*, and within this, and on a still higher level, the *Court of the Priests*. The Temple itself, like the Tabernacle, consisted of the PORCH, the HOLY PLACE, and the HOLY OF HOLIES. (i) *The Porch* was ten cubits deep, twenty in width, and thirty cubits high, and either within or on either side of it rose two brazen Pillars, the one called JACHIN (*durability*), the other BOAZ (*strength*), adorned with network, chainwork, and pomegranates. (ii) *The Holy Place* was of hewn stone wainscotted with cedar, and overlaid with gold, and inwrought with beautiful carvings. In length it was forty cubits, in width twenty, in height thirty. Here stood the golden Altar of Incense, the Table of Shewbread, and the golden Candlesticks, five on the

right and five on the left. (iii) Separated by a rich veil was the *Holy of Holies*, which was a perfect cube of twenty cubits. Here was the ancient Ark overshadowed by two colossal Cherubim of olive wood overlaid with gold. They were ten cubits high, and stood facing each other, each having two wings expanded, so that one wing of each touched over the Ark, and the other touched the wall.

6. **The Dedication.** At length, by the seventh month in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, B.C. 1004, the work was completed, and all the chiefs of the different tribes, with the priests and Levites, were invited to the dedication. The king himself was seated on a raised throne of brass; the sacrificers stood before the altar of burnt-offering; countless sheep and oxen were then laid on it, and the Ark was solemnly brought from the tabernacle, where David had placed it, and conveyed within the Holy of Holies. At this moment the choir lifted up their voices accompanied by various kinds of music, the temple was filled with a cloud, and the glory of the Lord descended. Thereupon the king offered up a solemn prayer, at the close of which fire flashed forth and consumed the burnt-offerings and the sacrifices, and the people bowing with their faces to the ground worshipped and praised the Lord. The Dedication lasted seven days, and was followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, which was continued for two weeks, or twice the usual time, and then the king sent the people away *glad and merry in heart for the goodness of the Lord unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people.*

7. **Solomon's other Buildings.** Besides the Temple Solomon also constructed a sumptuous palace for himself, with beautiful pleasure grounds; a palace for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had espoused; and the "House of the Forest of Lebanon," so called from its being supported on rows of cedar pillars. He also constructed artificial reservoirs for supplying the city with water; fortified Baalath, Gezer, and Beth-horon on the road to the sea-coast; Hazor, to defend the entrance into his realm from Syria; Megiddo, to guard the plain of Jezreel; Tadmor, afterwards called *Palmyra*, and Tiphseh, or *Thapsacus*, on the Euphrates, to protect his eastern caravans. His reign was a period of great commercial enterprise: (i) Through his alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, the traffic of the Mediterranean was opened up to him, and his fleet sailed in company with that of Phœnicia to Tarshish or Tartessus on the southern coast of Spain, and brought back every three years of the products of its rich silver mines. (ii) Having possession of the ports of Elath and Ezion-geber, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

he constructed another fleet which sailed to OPHIR, either in the south of Arabia or, as some think, a part of India, and returned with gold, silver, ivory, and other products. (iii) He also exchanged the produce of his own country for the horses and chariots and linen-yarn of Egypt, while caravans of the native tribes transported into his dominions the spices, incense, gold, and precious stones of Arabia.

8. *Solomon's Sins.* Great, however, as was the external splendour of his reign, there were many cankers secretly eating away the true life of the nation. The king's commercial alliances did not tend to keep the nation faithful to Jehovah. Like other eastern sovereigns, he surrounded himself with numerous wives and concubines from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Phœnicia, who, as he grew old, *turned away his heart*, and set up altars even in the Holy City to Baal and Ashtaroah, Moloch, and Chemosh. At first, indeed, there were few signs of weakness amidst so much that was magnificent and imposing, and when the queen of Sheba came from Yemen in Arabia to prove the king with hard questions and beheld his magnificent palaces, and all his glory, she confessed that the half of his fame and grandeur had not been told her. But before long clouds began to gather, portending the coming storm.

9. *Close of his Reign.* (i) The quarter whence danger first threatened was in the land of Edom, whence Hadad, who was of the blood royal, had escaped from the massacre in David's reign, and flying into Egypt married the sister of the Egyptian queen. Thence he now returned, and commencing a revolt, began to threaten Solomon's communications with the Gulf of Elath. (ii) The next adversary appeared in the north-east provinces of the empire, where a Syrian, named Rezon, seized Damascus, and threatened the royal commerce with Tadmor and the Euphrates. (iii) But a far more formidable troubler of his peace appeared nearer home in the person of JEROBOAM, of the tribe of Ephraim. Noticing his industry and activity during the fortification of Millo, Solomon made him superintendent of the works, and collector of the taxes from Ephraim. In this position he was made fully aware of all the oppressions of the people, and one day was leaving Jerusalem, when the prophet AHIJAH of Shiloh met him, and rending a new outer robe which he wore into twelve pieces, gave ten of them to Jeroboam, telling him that he should reign over ten of the tribes, and assuring him of the Divine protection, if he continued faithful to Jehovah. News of this reaching Solomon he would have put Jeroboam to death, but he fled to Egypt to the court of Shishak (*Sheshonk I.*), where he remained during the rest of

Solomon's reign. While, however, the signs of danger were becoming more and more evident, Solomon's reign of forty years came to a close, B.C. 975. He had indeed built the promised Temple, and adorned Jerusalem with sumptuous palaces, but the hopes he had inspired at the beginning of his reign had not been fulfilled. He had encouraged some of the worst forms of idolatry, had multiplied wives, amassed enormous wealth, laid heavy burdens on the people, and sated with pomp and splendour, confessed the vanity of his life (Eccles. i. 12—18), and the great empire he had received from his father was not destined to outlast the conclusion of his reign.

BOOK IX.

Kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

PART I.

Period of mutual hostility. B.C. 975—918.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Rehoboam's Folly.** REHOBOAM, the successor of Solomon, was 41 years of age when he came to the throne, B.C. 975. Deeming it right to obtain a general recognition of his title, he called together an assembly of the people at Shechem, where he was confronted by JEROBOAM, who had been summoned from Egypt and now boldly demanded a remission of the taxes and severe burdens bearing upon the nation. Rehoboam requested three days for deliberation, and first consulted the old advisers of his father. They all suggested that he should accede to the request and lighten the nation's burden. Then he turned to younger counsellors, who advised that he should firmly refuse any such concession. In an evil hour Rehoboam hearkened to their words, and when the envoys again headed by Jeroboam appeared, he replied that whereas his father *had made their yoke grievous he would add to it, and whereas he had chastised them with whips he would chastise them with scorpions.*

2. **Revolt of the Ten Tribes.** A general spirit of rebellion greeted this reply, and the envoys of the Ten Tribes returned home in extreme indignation. Not perceiving the full force of the rising storm, the king sent Adoram, the chief receiver of the tribute, to levy the usual dues. But *all Israel stoned him with stones that he died*, and the king himself was fain to fly in haste to Jerusalem. His first impulse was to punish his rebellious subjects, and for this purpose he mustered an army of 180,000 men. But the prophet Shemaiah in the name of the Lord forbade a civil war, for the rending of the kingdom *was*

from Him, whereupon the projected contest was given up, and the rebellion was complete.

3. **The Rival Kingdoms.** According to the new division of the country the KINGDOM OF JUDAH included that tribe together with Benjamin, and afterwards a part if not all of Simeon and Dan. Its area was rather less than Northumberland, Durham, and Westmoreland. For the present Edom remained its faithful vassal, and Philistia continued quiet. The KINGDOM OF ISRAEL included the remaining eight tribes, together with the coast line between Accho and Joppa. Its area was very nearly as large as Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland. Its vassal states were Moab and so much of Syria as had remained subject to Solomon.

4. **Jeroboam's Sacrifice.** Having rebuilt and fortified Shechem, Jeroboam, desirous of preventing his subjects from going up to the Festivals at Jerusalem, set up two calves of gold, figures probably of the Egyptian Apis or Mnevis, at DAN and BETHEL, and established a new order of the priests, taken not from the tribe of Levi, but from the lowest of the people. Then he proclaimed a solemn festival on the 15th day of the 8th month, and was offering incense in person at the altar at Bethel, when a man of God from Judah appeared, denounced the idolatrous service, and declared that a future king, by name JOSIAH, should burn men's bones upon the altar and desecrate it. Filled with rage Jeroboam stretched forth his hand to seize the bold stranger, when it was suddenly paralysed, and at the same time the altar was rent, and the ashes of the victims poured out. Thereupon in great alarm the king implored the prophet to intercede for him, and, the other complying, his hand was restored. Grateful for this kindness the king invited the man of God to partake of a meal, but the other declined; he had received positive commands to linger not a moment at Bethel, nor even return by the same road he had come, and so he departed.

5. **The Old Prophet of Bethel.** On the road, however, he was lingering under an oak, when an old prophet of Bethel drew near, and either with the full intention of deceiving him, or of winning respect for himself by being seen in company with such an accredited messenger of God, declared himself the bearer of a distinct message from the Lord that he should return. On this the other returned, but as they were seated at meat, the Spirit of God came upon the old prophet, and he, the deceiver, had to pronounce the doom of the deceived, that for his faithlessness his body should never come into the sepulchre of his fathers. So with his doom upon him the other went his way, and a lion met him and slew him. Hearing of what had

occurred, the old prophet hurried to the spot, and there found him lying on the ground, with the lion also and the ass on which he had rode still standing there, for the beast of prey had not eaten the corpse nor torn the ass. Thereupon he took the body and laid it in his own tomb, charging his sons after his own death to bury him beside his victim.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Death of the son of Jeroboam.** In spite, however, of the late warning Jeroboam persisted in his idolatrous practices, and before long received intimation that his dynasty was to pass away. His son ABIJAH fell sick, whereupon, anxious to know the issue of his illness, he sent his wife to consult the prophet Ahijah. Though old and blind the prophet knew who was his visitor in spite of her disguise, and distinctly told her that her son would die, and that his death would be the prelude of the destruction of Jeroboam's dynasty. With a heavy heart she returned, and as she entered the town of Tirzah, Abijah became rapidly worse, and the blind prophet's words came true.

2. **Rehoboam's sins and death.** Meanwhile ceaseless hostilities had been carried on between the rival kings. At first Rehoboam had walked in the ways of the Lord, but before long, like his father, he took to himself numerous wives and concubines, and forgetting the Mosaic Law set an evil example to his subjects, who began to build high places and set up *images and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree*. Five years after his accession his peace was rudely disturbed by an invasion of his dominions. Shishak king of Egypt, instigated probably by Jeroboam, came up against him with an enormous army of Libyans, Nubians, and Ethiopians, penetrated as far as his capital, and forced him to purchase an ignominious peace by delivering up many of the treasures of his palace and of the temple. After this deep humiliation the moral condition of his kingdom became somewhat improved. The rest, however, of Rehoboam's reign was not marked by any signal events, and he died B.C. 957, after a reign of 17 years.

3. **Reign of Abijah.** His son and successor ABIJAH made a fresh and resolute effort to recover the ten tribes, and in a great battle in the mountain-range of Ephraim defeated the forces of Jeroboam with enormous loss, and took the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephraim. From this defeat the king of Israel never recovered, and soon after died, bequeathing the throne to his son NADAB, while Abijah also died, after a brief reign of 3 years, and was succeeded by his son ASA, B.C. 954.

4. **Reign of Nadab.** The reign of Nadab was very brief, lasting only two years. As he was besieging Gibbethon in Dan, which had been taken by the Philistines, BAASHA of the tribe of Issachar conspired against him, and smote him and all the house of Jeroboam, B.C. 953.

5. **Reign of Asa.** Mindful of the conditions on which he held his kingdom, ASA no sooner ascended the throne than he commenced a general religious reform, removing the idols his father had set up, and cutting down the groves. Having thus restored the worship of Jehovah, he fortified several frontier towns, and equipped a large army, with which he completely defeated a vast host, which invaded his dominions, led by Zerah the successor of Shishak. But the peace which his kingdom now enjoyed was disturbed by the hostility of BAASHA, who recovered the territory his predecessor had lost, and fortified Ramah, about 6 miles north of Jerusalem, to annoy his rival. On this Asa sent silver and gold to Benhadad I. king of Syria, and persuaded him to break off his alliance with Baasha, and fling an army into northern Palestine, which destroyed several of the frontier towns. This compelled Baasha to withdraw his forces, while Asa recovered Ramah, destroyed the fortress his rival had built, and with the stones and timber built two towers, Geba and Mizpeh, to check any similar attempt in future. This first instance of an alliance between a Hebrew king and a heathen power was severely rebuked by HANANI the seer, who was therefore flung into prison. In other respects Asa had been an energetic and pious ruler, and was committed to the tomb amidst general mourning B.C. 914, bequeathing the throne to his son JEHOASHAPHAT.

6. **Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri.** Meanwhile there had been great changes in the kingdom of Israel. After a reign of 24 years, during which he removed his capital to Tirzah, carried on a ceaseless war with Asa, and persisted in walking in the ways of Jeroboam, Baasha died, and was succeeded, B.C. 930, by his son ELAH. The new king had hardly been on the throne a year when he was assassinated by ZIMRI, *the captain of half his chariots*, who ruthlessly murdered every member of the house of Baasha, B.C. 929. Zimri in his turn had barely occupied the throne seven days, when he was attacked at Tirzah by OMRI one of his captains, and despairing of aid fired the palace of Tirzah, and perished in the flames. After a struggle of 5 years with another aspirant TIBNI the son of Ginath, OMRI's party prevailed, and founded the third dynasty of Israel. For 6 years the new king made Tirzah his capital, and then bought for two talents of silver an oval-shaped isolated hill about 6 miles

north of Shechem, which from its owner **SHEMER** he called *Shomrôn*, afterwards corrupted into the Chaldee *Shemrin*, and the Greek *Samaria*. Here he reigned 6 years more, and did evil in the eyes of the Lord more than all the preceding kings of Israel. He not only formed an alliance with Benhadad I. and surrendered to him some of his border-towns, but admitted a Syrian embassy into Samaria, and gave his son and successor **AHAB** in marriage to **JEZEBEL**, daughter of **ETHBAAL**, king of **Zidon**.

PART II.

Period of mutual alliance, and hostility to Syria. B.C. 918—884.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Reign of Jehoshaphat.** The first act of Jehoshaphat was to garrison the fenced cities in his dominions; then with much zeal he tried to put down the high places and groves, and sent a commission of priests and Levites to instruct the people in the Law. His piety was not unrewarded. The Lord gave him victory over the Philistines and Arabians, who brought him tribute, and thus enabled him to maintain a large standing army.

2. **Jezebel and Elijah.** Meanwhile in the kingdom of Israel Jezebel had acquired unbounded influence over her weak husband, Ahab, and persuaded him to establish the worship of **BAAL** on the most extensive scale. Near the palace of Samaria rose a temple in honour of this Phœnician deity, while 450 of the prophets of Baal and 400 of Astarte were supported at the queen's table, and, so great was her severity towards the prophets of Jehovah, that they were fain to hide themselves in dens and caves, and there eke out a perilous existence. But while she was striving to set up the religion of her own land, and Ahab was building his new palace at Jezreel, there suddenly appeared in his court one of the most remarkable men that Israel ever produced. From the wooded uplands across the Jordan came the great prophet **ELIJAH** the Tishbite, who without a word of warning announced to Ahab that there should be no dew nor rain for three years and six months (Lk. iv. 25) within his dominions.

3. **Elijah at Cherith and Zarephath.** Having delivered his message Elijah fled to the brook Cherith, and was for some time supported by ravens, which brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening, while he drank of the water of the brook. At length the little streamlet was dried up, whereupon the prophet repaired to the little village of

ZAREPHATH OR SAREPTA (Lk. iv. 25—29), on the seashore between Tyre and Sidon. As he drew near the village, he met the widow with whom he was to lodge, and who having but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, was gathering a few sticks to make a last meal for herself and child before she died. Deep as was her poverty, yet the prophet bade her make a little cake for himself first, and promised that the cruse of oil should not fail, nor the barrel of meal waste till the rain returned. Strong in faith the woman did as he bade her, and for a full year she and her house did eat, nor did their supplies fail. Before long, however, her son sickened and seemed at the point of death. In the agony of her grief she imputed this trial to the presence of her mysterious visitor. But Elijah took the boy up to his own chamber, laid him on his own bed, and having stretched himself three times upon him cried mightily to the Lord that his life might be restored. His prayer was heard, the child revived, and the prophet returned him to his mother, who was now sure that the word of the Lord in the mouth of her guest was truth.

4. **The Controversy on Carmel.** Meanwhile in the kingdom of Israel the people were suffering the miseries of prolonged drought. Sheep, cattle, horses perished for want of water, and Ahab himself was fain to leave his palace and divide with OBADIAH, his chief domestic officer, who at the risk of his life had remained faithful to Jehovah, the duty of searching every nook and corner to discover any vestige of herbage for the mules and horses. While thus employed, suddenly Obadiah was confronted by Elijah, who had returned from Zarephath, and now bade him tell his master of his return. Fearful lest, in his absence, the Spirit of the Lord might hurry the prophet elsewhere, Obadiah at first demurred. But the prophet reassured him, and he went and told Ahab, who turned to meet Elijah. In a few brief but cutting words the prophet denounced his idolatries, and then bade him summon to the eastern ridge of Carmel the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 prophets of Astarte. The monarch dared not disobey, and the prophets, followed by a vast concourse of people, repaired to the appointed spot. Here Elijah directed that two bullocks should be chosen, that one should be slain by the priests of Baal, and cut in pieces; that these should be laid upon an altar with no fire under; that they should then call upon the name of their gods, to see if they would answer by fire. What he suggested was done, and from morning till noon the priests of Baal cried unto their god, *but there was no voice, neither any that answered.* Thereupon Elijah suggested that they should cry aloud, for

perhaps their god was meditating, or pursuing, or sleeping, and needed to be awakened. Stung to the quick, they redoubled their cries, and cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out. But prayers, cries, lacerations, were each and all in vain.

5. **Elijah's Sacrifice.** The hour for the evening sacrifice now drew near, when Elijah having repaired an ancient altar, slew his victim, and laid it thereon. Then round about the altar he dug a trench, and caused water to be three times poured over it, till it filled even the trench. This done, he poured forth his whole soul in prayer that God would that day prove that He was indeed the Lord. His prayer was answered. The fire of the Lord descended, consumed the sacrifice, and licked up even the water that was in the trench. Thereupon with one accord the people fell upon their faces and exclaimed, *Jehovah, He is the God, Jehovah, He is the God.* Perceiving that the moment for action was come, Elijah then ordered the prophets of Baal to be taken down to the banks of the Kishon, where they were slain, after which he returned to the king, and bade him join in a sacrificial feast. Meanwhile he himself ascended the mountain, and having bidden his servant look towards the sea, remained wrapped in prayer. Six times the servant came back, saying that he could see nothing, but the seventh time he announced that *a little cloud, like a man's hand,* was rising out of the sea. On hearing of this long-desired sign, the prophet bade the king prepare his chariot, and make for his palace, for rain was at hand. The king obeyed, and soon the whole sky was overcast, a wind arose, and the welcome rain poured down, while Ahab urged his chariot to Jezreel, preceded by Elijah, who girding up his loins ran before him to the entrance of the city.

6. **Elijah at Horeb.** But now when the triumph of the prophet seemed complete, his wonted courage failed him. Informed of all that had occurred, Jezebel threatened him with certain death, and Elijah fled towards Beersheba. Thence he went into the waste country, and flinging himself under a juniper tree, requested that he might die, and fell asleep. Presently an angel awoke him, and bade him refresh himself, and then proceed to Horeb, the Mount of God. There as he lodged in one of the caverns of the awful mountain, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, *What doest thou here, Elijah?* In reply, the prophet urged that all he had done for Jehovah had been done in vain. On this, the Lord bade him stand before him, face to face upon the mountain, and first a mighty wind shattered the cliffs of Sinai, *but the Lord was not in the wind;* then

an earthquake shook the rocks, but *the Lord was not in the earthquake*; then a fire blazed forth, but *the Lord was not in the fire*. Then while all was quiet, there came a *still small voice*, and Elijah learnt that he was not left alone, and that there was something yet left for him to do. He was to return, and anoint HAZAEL king over Syria, JEHU the son of Nimshi king of Israel, and ELISHA of Abel-meholah as his own successor, and was told that whereas he thought himself alone, the Lord had left him 7000 in Israel which had not bowed the knee unto Baal.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Call of Elisha.** Of the three commands laid upon him, Elijah straightway proceeded to execute the last. From Horeb he proceeded northwards, and at Abel-meholah (*the meadow of the dance*) found Elisha the son of Shaphat ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. Casting his mantle upon him, the prophet called him to follow him, and Elisha having bidden farewell to his father and mother, and celebrated a parting feast with his people, arose and followed him and became henceforth his constant attendant.

2. **Siege of Samaria.** Meantime Ahab's kingdom was invaded by Benhadad II. king of Syria, who, aided by thirty-two vassal kings, laid siege to Samaria, but, as a prophet of God predicted, was defeated with great loss. The following year, however, the Syrian king returned. Thinking that they had been previously defeated because in a hilly region they had attacked a people whose gods were gods of the hills, the Syrians now resolved to fight in a more level region. At Aphek, therefore, in the plain east of the Jordan, they confronted them. But again they were defeated with great loss, and the town of Aphek falling with a crash, owing to a sudden earthquake, buried upwards of 27,000 in the ruins. Benhadad himself escaped, and by the advice of his attendants threw himself on the mercy of the conqueror. With impolitic clemency, Ahab spared his life, and concluded an alliance with the national enemy, for which he was sternly rebuked by one of the prophets.

3. **The Murder of Naboth.** Shortly after this an incident occurred which brought down upon Ahab an awful doom. Near his palace at Jezreel was a vineyard belonging to a man named NABOTH. Wishing to add it to his palace grounds, and convert it into a garden of herbs, Ahab offered to purchase it of Naboth, or to give him in exchange another and even a better piece of ground. But this Naboth stoutly refused, and the king returned in great vexation to his palace, flung himself upon his bed and would eat no bread. While he was in this mood, Jezebel

came forward, and learning the cause, bade him trouble himself no more, for *she would give him the vineyard*. Thereupon she wrote a warrant in Ahab's name, sealed it with his seal, and sent it to the elders of Jezreel, directing them to convene a solemn assembly, publicly accuse Naboth of blasphemy against God and the king, and stone him to death. According to her will Naboth was dragged forth, condemned, and stoned together with his sons. The vineyard had now lapsed to the crown, and Jezebel hearing how her orders had been carried out, bade her lord go down and take possession of it. Accordingly Ahab went, and there met no other than the great Elijah. In stern and awful words the prophet denounced the cruel murder, and declared in the name of the Lord that Ahab's house should share the fate of those of Jeroboam and of Baasha, that Jezebel should be eaten up by dogs at the wall of Jezreel, and that dogs should lick up his own blood on the very spot where they had licked up that of Naboth. On hearing this awful sentence, Ahab rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, fasted, and displayed signs of repentance. Whereupon it was announced that the doom should not descend upon his house during his own lifetime, but without any doubt during that of his son's.

4. **Death of Ahab.** Meanwhile the relations between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel had been more peaceful than at any other period since the separation of the tribes. Not only were hostilities laid aside, but ATHALIAH, the daughter of Ahab, was given in marriage to JEHOAM, the son of Jehoshaphat. Shortly afterwards, on the occasion of a visit from the king of Judah Ahab proposed that they should make a joint effort to recover the important city of Ramoth-gilead, on the east of Jordan, from the hands of the Syrians. Jehoshaphat suggested that they should first ascertain the will of Jehovah, and declined to accept the authority of Ahab's 400 prophets, who all bade him go up, and assured him of success. Accordingly MICAH, the son of Imlah, was called in from his prison where he had been confined by Ahab, and he at first ironically assured the king of success. Afterwards being adjured by Ahab to speak the truth, he boldly affirmed that the other prophets were all filled with lying spirits, and that he was destined to fall in the campaign. For these outspoken words he was sent back to undergo a still stricter imprisonment, while the two kings set out from Jezreel to the battle-field. There, though disguised, Ahab could not escape his doom. *A certain man drew a bow at a venture*, and pierced the joints of his breastplate. Stayed up in his chariot till the evening, he then died, and on being brought back to Samaria, the bloody chariot was washed

in the pool of the city, beside which Naboth and his sons had been murdered.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Jehoshaphat rebuked.** On his return from the campaign, Jehoshaphat was sternly rebuked by one of the prophets for his guilty alliance with the court of Israel, and he resolved from henceforth to devote himself to the spiritual and temporal welfare of his own subjects. For this purpose he went on a second personal tour through his dominions, placed judges in all the fenced cities, remodelled the tribunals, and strove to reclaim the people to the worship of Jehovah. He then tried in vain to open a trade with Ophir, but repulsed with complete success a formidable invasion of his kingdom by the people of Moab, Ammon, and Edom.

2. **Death of Ahaziah.** Meanwhile AHAZIAH, the son and successor of Ahab on the throne of Israel, began to feel the effects of the late defeat at Ramoth-gilead. The Syrians being masters of the country of Gilead cut off all communication with Moab, and the Moabite king declined to send the usual tribute. Before long Ahaziah fell through a lattice in his palace at Samaria, and sustained much injury. A true son of Jezebel, he sent messengers to the city of Ekron, to enquire of the oracle of Baal-zebub (*the lord of flies*) whether he should recover. On the way his messengers were met by Elijah, who after reproaching them for consulting a heathen deity instead of Jehovah, bade them return to their master and inform him that he would certainly die. They returned, and Ahaziah discovering whom they had met, instantly sent a captain with fifty men to seize the bold prophet. The soldiers went, and finding Elijah on one of the heights of Carmel bade him come down. But Elijah refused to descend when thus commanded, and at his word fire came forth and consumed the captain and his force. A similar fate befell a second force. But a third captain in an altered tone implored the prophet to descend, and assured by God of safety, he went into the presence of the king and in person announced his approaching end. Shortly after which Ahaziah died, and was succeeded by JEHOHAM, B.C. 896.

3. **The Translation of Elijah.** No long time after these events, Elijah himself was warned that the hour for his own removal from the earth drew near. Together with Elisha, whom he had vainly tried to persuade to stay behind, he proceeded to Bethel, and thence to Jericho, being warned at both places by companies from the "schools of the prophets" of something about to befall him. Thence the two pressed on

towards the Jordan, while fifty of the prophets ascended the heights behind the town to watch what would occur. On reaching the river's brink Elijah smote the waters with his prophetic mantle, and they divided, and the two went over on dry ground. Then the prophet enquired what he should do for his faithful attendant before he was taken away. Elisha asked for *a double portion of his spirit*, and was assured that his request should be granted if he looked steadfastly upon him as he was taken away. While they were thus conversing, a chariot of fire and horses of fire suddenly parted them asunder, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. With a great and bitter cry Elisha called after him as he ascended, and then returned with the mantle of his master towards the Jordan, the waters of which, on his smiting them with the mantle, divided, and he passed over. The sons of the prophets, who had been watching behind Jericho, now drew near and bowed down before him, and against his advice sent fifty strong men to search for Elijah, but after prolonging their search for three days they found him not.

4. **Elisha at Jericho.** For a time Elisha tarried at Jericho, and here he performed his second miracle. A spring near the town was noxious and unfit for use, but the prophet at the earnest request of the inhabitants put salt into a new cruse, and poured it into the spring at its source, and the waters were healed. Thence he repaired to Bethel, and was entering the town, when the youths of the place came forth, and began to revile him, saying, *Go up, bald head!* on which he turned round and cursed them in the name of the Lord, and from a forest near, haunted by wild beasts, there came forth two she-bears, which tore forty-two of them.

5. **Miracles of Elisha.** After this the prophet took up his abode at Samaria and performed many miracles during the reign of Jehoram, the fame of which could not fail to strengthen the cause of true religion. (i) A widow of one of the sons of the prophets was in debt, and her creditor was coming on the morrow to take her two sons and sell them as slaves. On this she applied to the prophet, telling him that the only thing she had in the house was a cruse of oil. This Elisha caused to multiply, till she had filled all the vessels she could borrow, and so defrayed the debt. (ii) At Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar, where a rich woman had prepared a chamber for him, he restored her son to life, when he had been struck in the harvest field by the burning rays of the sun. (iii) At Gilgal, in a time of dearth, wild and poisonous gourds were shred into a caldron by some of the sons of the prophets, but by pouring

meal into it Elisha rendered the pottage fit for food. (iv) At the same place, being supplied with twenty barley loaves and some roasted ears of corn, he ordered them to be distributed amongst a hundred men then present, assuring his hesitating attendant that there would not only be enough but more than enough, which came to pass. (v) At Jericho, the sons of the prophets were constructing a dwelling near the Jordan, and were felling trees in the wood which lined its banks, when the head of an axe which one of them had borrowed flew off and sank in the water. Thereupon Elisha bade a piece of wood be flung into the stream, when the iron head reappeared and was restored to the borrower.

6. **Elisha and Naaman.** But the prophet's fame was soon destined to spread beyond the limits of his own country. The captain at this time of the army of Ben-hadad king of Syria was NAAMAN, a man of great bravery and held in high esteem by his master, *but he was a leper*. Hearing from a little Israelitish maid, who waited upon his wife, that Elisha could cure him of his leprosy, he proceeded with a letter from Ben-hadad and rich gifts of gold and silver, and presented himself before Jehoram. But the king of Israel seeing in the letter only a pretence for a quarrel rent his clothes, and declared it impossible that he could cure him of his malady. On this Elisha bade the king send his visitor to him, and he should know there *was a prophet in Israel*. With his horses, therefore, and his chariots, and his long retinue, Naaman presented himself before his door. But to his surprise the prophet came not forth, and merely sent a message bidding him go and wash seven times in the Jordan. Deeming himself insulted, the warrior at first *turned away in a rage*, but at length was persuaded by his servants to make trial of the prescribed cure, and had no sooner dipped himself seven times in the rushing stream, than he found his flesh restored *like the flesh of a little child*.

7. **Gehazi.** Filled with gratitude for so great a cure, Naaman returned to the abode of his healer, and pressed upon him a reward. But the prophet refused to take anything, and Naaman went his way, taking with him two mules' burden of the earth of the land, where he had received so great a benefit, for the construction probably of an altar to Jehovah. Though, however, his master had declined to take anything from the generous Syrian, GEHAZI, his servant, was not willing to see him thus depart without obtaining any reward. When, therefore, Naaman had left, he hurried after him, and informed him that already there had come to his master two of the sons of the prophets, for whom he craved a talent of silver and two changes of raiment.

Naaman pressed him to take two talents and two changes of raiment, and sent two of his retinue to bear them to a secret place, whence Gehazi removed them to the house. But the prophet had marked every step in his guilty conduct, and when he stood before him again sternly rebuked him for the lie and deceit, and pronounced upon him the awful doom, from which Naaman had just been delivered, *and he went out of his presence a leper as white as snow.*

8. **Siege of Samaria.** Shortly after this, in spite of the miraculous cure of their general, the Syrians renewed their invasions, and even encamped in spots which Jehoram was wont to frequent. Warned, however, by Elisha, the king of Israel more than once escaped the ambuscades laid for him, which so provoked Ben-hadad that he became suspicious of his own retinue. At length one of his servants informed him that it was Elisha, who told his foe of all his plans, on which the Syrian king sent horses and chariots and a large force to Dothan, 6 miles north of Samaria, to capture the prophet. But at the moment when the Syrians thought to make him an easy prey, they were struck with a sudden blindness, and were easily led away to Samaria. The king of Israel would have put them to death, but Elisha dissuaded him, and they were sent back to Ben-hadad, who thereupon drew off his troops.

9. **Second Siege.** Before long, however, the Syrian king again came up, and besieged Samaria for a space of three years. During this period the inhabitants were reduced to the direst extremities. Two mothers agreed to boil their children for food; one actually did so; but the other hid her child and kept it alive. The awful story reaching the ears of Jehoram, he hurried to the house of Elisha, and enquired why in the face of such terrible sufferings he should worship Jehovah any more. In reply the prophet assured him that the very next day a measure of fine flour and two measures of barley should be sold for a shekel in the gate of Samaria. *Though Jehovah should make windows in heaven, this could not be,* replied an officer, on whose hand the king leaned. *It will,* replied Elisha; *thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.* Marvellous as were these words, yet they were fulfilled. That very evening four lepers stole from the city into the Syrian camp, to find no man there! Alarmed by a mysterious noise of chariots and horses, the Syrians had thought that an army of Hittites and Egyptians had come to the relief of Samaria, and had fled in confusion. After satiating the pangs of hunger the lepers announced the fact to the warder at the gate, and he to the king. Suspecting treachery, Jehoram sent two horsemen to

reconnoitre, who returned announcing that the whole road to the Jordan was strewn with the effects of the scattered foe. On this a general rush was made by the starving people to the Syrian camp. To preserve some degree of order Jehoram entrusted the command at the gate to the officer who had scoffed at Elisha's prophecy. Here the crush was so great that he was trodden to death, and before evening *two measures of fine flour were sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel*, and Samaria was delivered.

PART III.

Renewal of mutual hostilities; decline of both kingdoms.

B.C. 884—588.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Hazael king over Syria.** Ben-hadad after this defeat returned to Damascus, and soon lay prostrate with his last illness. Hearing that Elisha was in the city, he sent HAZAEL an officer of distinction to enquire whether he should recover: the prophet replied in ambiguous words, and went on to predict the evil that his wondering listener would do to the children of Israel; *for, said he, Jehovah hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.* Returning to his master, Hazael told him but half the prophet's answer, and the next day Ben-hadad was found suffocated, and Hazael mounted the Syrian throne.

2. **The Anointing of Jehu.** Meanwhile AHAZIAH had succeeded to the kingdom of Judah, B.C. 885, and in alliance with the king of Israel attempted to recover Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians, but was defeated, and forced to return to Jezreel. At this juncture Elisha, knowing that the time was come for the doomed destruction of Ahab's family, sent one of the "sons of the prophets" to Ramoth-gilead with a horn of oil to anoint JEHU, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, king over Israel. As one of Ahab's guards, Jehu, in company with Bidkar, had ridden behind his master to the fatal plot of Naboth's vineyard, and heard the terrible warning of Elijah against his murderer. Since then he had risen to a position of some importance, and was well known for his vehemence and activity. According to his instructions the messenger of Elisha repaired to Ramoth-gilead, and pouring the oil on Jehu's head in an inner chamber, he announced the Divine will that he should be king and destroy the entire family of Ahab. Shortly afterwards Jehu came forth, and rejoined his comrades, who eagerly enquired the purport of the *mad fellow's* visit. At first he tried to evade the question, but at length revealed all that had passed,

whereupon they instantly threw off their garments, and placing him on a rude throne, blew the trumpets and shouted *Jehu is king.*

3. **Jehu at Jezreel.** Knowing that everything depended on the speed of his movements, the new king instantly drove to the fords of Jordan, and hence direct towards Jezreel. Recognized by his furious driving, he was soon met by two horsemen sent by Jehoram, who enquired, *Is it peace?* These he detained, and hurrying on encountered the king of Israel in his chariot, who had come forth to meet him with Ahaziah king of Judah. *Is it peace, Jehu?* enquired Jehoram. Thereupon Jehu began to denounce furiously the idolatries of his mother JEZEBEL, and as the other turned to fly drawing a bow with his full strength he shot him through the heart. Pausing only to charge Bidkar to fling his body into the portion of Naboth, he hurried on after Ahaziah, who fled towards the village of Engannim, but was overtaken and wounded, and died at Megiddo. Jehu now made for Jezreel, where Jezebel still retained her influence. Hearing of his approach, the queen-mother tired her head and painted her eyes, and cried out from the latticed window as he passed beneath, *Had Zimri peace who slew his master?* On this Jehu looked up, and ordered the eunuchs in attendance to throw her down, and they threw her down before his chariot, and he trode her under foot. Entering the palace he then began to eat and drink, and commanded that the fallen queen should be buried. But those, who went forth to execute his orders, found nothing of her remaining save her skull and feet and the palms of her hands. The dogs had devoured all the rest, and thus fulfilled the words of Elijah, *In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.*

4. **Destruction of Ahab's Family.** The thoughts of the conqueror now turned towards Samaria, where under the care of the elders of the city resided the sons and grandsons of Ahab, to the number of seventy persons. To these Jehu wrote a letter bidding them select one of their master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for his house. Terrified at such a request, the elders replied that they were ready to submit in all things to the usurper's will, and in compliance with a second letter, slew the seventy sons and grandsons of Ahab and sent their heads to Jezreel. Having secured this proof of their devotion, Jehu set out in person for Samaria. On the way he met forty-two sons or nephews of the late king of Judah, and directed that they too should be put to death. A little further on he encountered Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, of the race of the Kenites, and taking him up into his chariot bade him come

and see his zeal for the Lord. Side by side the two then drove into the city, and the butchery of Ahab's relations was renewed. Resolved, however, to strike a still greater blow, Jehu convened an assembly of the people, and having announced his intention of celebrating a great feast in honour of Baal, bade all the worshippers of that god on pain of death assemble in his temple. On the appointed day the people flocked thither and filled it from end to end. Jehu himself offered sacrifice, and when it was ended, eighty trusty warriors, who had secretly received their orders, rushed in, massacred the whole assembly, destroyed the images, and defiled the temple.

CHAPTER II.

1. *Joash and Athaliah.* Meanwhile similar scenes of bloodshed began to be enacted even in the kingdom of Judah. On the death of Ahaziah, B.C. 884, *ATHALIAH*, the queen-mother, usurped the supreme power, and put to death all the seed royal, who had escaped the sword of Jehu, save *JOASH* the infant son of the late king, who was concealed for six years by his aunt, the wife of the high-priest Jehoiada, in the House of the Lord. During this period the usurpation of *Athaliah* was endured, but in the seventh year, B.C. 878, *Jehoiada* resolved to bring about a change. Gathering round him all the supporters of the house of David, he placed armed guards at the entrances of the Temple, and bringing forth the little prince, publicly crowned and anointed him. The shouts of the people reaching the ears of *Athaliah*, she came into the Temple and beheld her grandson already invested with regal honours. Instantly she raised a cry of *treason*, but was hurried forth, and slain at the entrance of the Horse-Gate, while a solemn covenant was ratified by the king, high-priest, and people, by which they bound themselves to be faithful to *Jehovah*, and in proof thereof at once destroyed the Temple of *Baal*, which *Athaliah* had built, slew its priest, and broke down its altars and images.

2. *Death of Joash.* During the life-time of *Jehoiada*, *Joash* ruled his people well, and carried out a diligent repair of the Temple, which had suffered much during the reigns of his predecessors. But on the death of the high-priest, at the advanced age of 130, a change came over his policy and character. Led away by the seductions of the princes of Judah he revived the worship of *Baal*, and even caused *Zechariah*, the son of the late high-priest, who had rebuked him for his apostasy, to be stoned to death between the Holy Place and the Altar of Burnt-offering (Mtt. xxiii. 35). The last words of *Zechariah*,

the Lord look upon it, and require it, were soon fulfilled. The next year Hazael, king of Syria, appeared with an army, and having defeated a large force of Judah, carried away to Damascus many of the Temple treasures. Nor did Joash long survive this disgrace. Wounded in the late contest, he was lying on his bed in the fortress of Millo, when he was suddenly attacked by two of his servants and slain, B.C. 839.

3. **Jehoahaz and Joash.** Meanwhile Jehu had reigned upwards of 28 years, and though he had put down the worship of Baal he retained the old calf-worship which Jeroboam had established at Dan and Bethel. On his death, B.C. 856, his son JEHOAHAZ ascended the throne, and soon began to feel the heavy hand of Hazael, who ravaged the territory of the tribes east of the Jordan, burnt its strongholds, massacred its population, and compelled the king of Israel to limit his army to 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 infantry. After an inglorious reign he bequeathed his throne to his son JEHOASH or JOASH, B.C. 841.

4. **Death of Elisha.** While the new king, in spite of the warnings the nation had received, persisted in idolatry, the aged prophet Elisha was struck with a mortal sickness. Filled with sorrow at the prospect of losing one who had placed his grandfather on the throne and had been to him a defence against the chariots and horsemen of Syria, the young king came to him and wept over him. Thereupon Elisha bade him open the window eastward towards the hated country, and place an arrow on the string of his bow. Then laying his hands upon the king's hands he bade him shoot. The young king shot once, twice, and yet again, and then stayed, instead of going on till he had exhausted the quiver. For this lack of energy he was told that the victories he might have gained would be limited to three. Shortly afterwards the aged seer expired, but his wonder-working power was not to cease with his life. During an invasion of the land by a marauding band of Moabites, a dead man was about to be buried in the cemetery which contained the prophet's sepulchre. Alarmed by the marauders the mourners hastily flung the corpse into the receptacle where the prophet lay, whereupon *the man revived and stood upon his feet*. Neither did his words fall to the ground, for three times Jehoash triumphed over the Syrians and recovered the cities they had taken from Israel.

5. **Amaziah.** Meanwhile AMAZIAH had succeeded to the throne of Judah, B.C. 839. His first care was to punish the murderers of his father, which he did with unusual lenity, sparing their children in accordance with the true spirit of the

Mosaic Law (Deut. xxiv. 16). He next resolved to punish the Edomites who had revolted, and hired 100,000 warriors of Israel as well as his own forces. These, however, he was warned by a prophet to dismiss, and attacking the Edomites defeated them with great slaughter, and captured their fortress of Petra. With strange perversity, however, he now set up in Jerusalem the idols of the very nation he had subdued. For this he was rebuked by a prophet, and misfortunes quickly thickened around him. Angry with the Israelite mercenaries who on their return homewards had ravaged many of the towns of Judah, he challenged his rival Jehoash to battle, and being defeated was conveyed as a captive to Jerusalem, the walls of which were partly broken down and the Temple treasures rifled. Shortly after this Jehoash died and bequeathed his throne to his son JEROBOAM II. B.C. 825, while Amaziah, who survived him fifteen years, being assassinated at Lachish, was succeeded by his son AZARIAH or Uzziah B.C. 810.

6. **Jeroboam II.** The reign of Jeroboam II., which lasted 41 years, or 52 if an interregnum of 11 years is included, was the most prosperous the king of Israel had ever known, for he not only captured Damascus, but recovered all the territory of Moab and Ammon, B.C. 825—763.

7. **Azariah or Uzziah,** the new king of Judah, B.C. 810, retained the sceptre upwards of 52 years, and gained many successes in war, subjugating the Philistines and Arabians, and recovering Elath, the famous port on the Red Sea. In the hour, however, of his prosperity his heart was lifted up, and assuming priestly functions he entered the Holy Place in the Temple to offer incense on the Golden Altar. But as he stood there censer in hand he was stricken with leprosy, and becoming thus incapable of discharging the regal functions lived in a separate house, while JOTHAM his son was appointed regent, and ultimately succeeded him B.C. 758.

8. **The Prophet Jonah.** Meanwhile the great empire of Assyria was advancing rapidly towards universal conquest. Its capital was NINEVEH, and thither on account of its sins the prophet JONAH was bidden to repair and denounce its approaching destruction. Shrinking from this dangerous duty the prophet went to Joppa, and there took ship for Tarshish, or Tartessus, on the southern coast of Spain. But during the voyage an awful storm arose, and the mariners at his own request flung him into the sea, where a large fish took him up, and after three days flung him forth alive on the dry land. Thus marvellously preserved he was a second time bidden to go to Nineveh, and now not daring to disobey, he suddenly appeared there, and cried *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* His mysterious

words filled the hearts of all with fear, and being reported to the king, he laid aside his royal robes, clad himself in sackcloth, and sat in ashes, bidding all his people follow his example. His commands were obeyed, and the inhabitants of Nineveh fasted and put on mourning, and humbled themselves before God. Their repentance was accepted, God deferred the judgment, and for more than another century Nineveh was destined to stand unharmed.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem.** On the death of Jeroboam II. B.C. 783, the kingdom of Israel fell into a fearful state of anarchy. At length, after an interregnum of eleven years, ZACHARIAH his son obtained the throne, who having occupied it but six months was assassinated by SHALLUM. The usurper retained the royal power for one month only, and then was deposed in his turn by MENAHEM, the son of Gadi, B.C. 772. During his reign PUL, king of Assyria, appeared on his north-east frontiers, and was only induced to draw off his forces by a present of 1,000 talents of silver, which Menahem wrung from his own people.

2. **Reigns of Pekah and Ahaz.** Menahem was succeeded by his son PEKAHIAH, B.C. 761, who, after a reign of two years, was assassinated by PEKAH, a captain of his body-guard, B.C. 759. The new king concluded an alliance with Syria, and resolved to attack the kingdom of Judah. Unable to do this during the reign of Jotham, on the accession of his weak son AHAZ, B.C. 742, he advanced against Jerusalem in alliance with REZIN, king of Syria, and took a vast number of captives, who were, however, restored by the advice of the prophet ODED, while Rezin captured the port of Elath, and settled there a Syrian colony. Ahaz now resolved in his turn to obtain foreign assistance, and sending an ample present from the temple treasures to TIGLATH-PILESER, the successor of Pul, persuaded him to espouse his cause. On this Tiglath-pileser marched against Damascus, B.C. 740, captured it, and slew Rezin. Then turning his arms against the king of Israel, he took many of his northern towns, and carried off their inhabitants to his own dominions,

3. **Idolatries of Ahaz.** But his alliance with Assyria availed Ahaz very little. Not only was he obliged to yield up the temple-treasures to Tiglath-pileser, but he had to appear in person at Damascus, and do homage to his protector. There too he conformed to idolatrous customs, and sent to Urijah the high-priest the pattern of an altar, and desired that another should be made like it. The high-priest obeyed, and the altar was not only placed within the Temple, but the king himself offered sacrifice upon it, and practised the worst forms of idolatry.

4. **Captivity of Israel.** Meanwhile the fortunes of the kingdom of Israel became more and more gloomy. After a reign of twenty years Pekah was succeeded, after several years of anarchy, B. C. 730, by his son HOSHEA, who had not long occupied the throne when Shalmaneser, the successor of Tiglath-pileser, invaded his territory, and laid siege to Samaria. Strong by nature, the city held out for three years, during which period Shalmaneser was obliged to return to Damascus, owing to a successful revolt headed by Sargon, to whom he forfeited his crown. Sargon renewed the siege, captured Samaria, B. C. 721, removed the Israelites to various places in his own dominions, and sent colonies from Cuthah, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, to occupy the country in their stead.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Reforms of Hezekiah.** While the kingdom of Israel thus came to an end, HEZEKIAH had succeeded Ahaz on the throne of Judah, B. C. 726. A pious and righteous king, he removed the high places, broke down the images, destroyed the brazen serpent, the venerable relic of their wilderness life, which the people worshipped under the name of *Nehushtan*, and cleansed and reopened the Temple with solemn sacrifices. He then celebrated a special Passover, which lasted upwards of 14 days, and having persuaded the people to renew their vows of allegiance to Jehovah, ventured to throw off the Assyrian yoke, and refused to pay the usual tribute.

2. **Invasion of Sennacherib.** In consequence of this step, Sennacherib, the successor of Sargon, appeared before Jerusalem, and Hezekiah consented to pay him 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, and stripped the Temple of many of its treasures to raise this enormous sum. Two years afterwards, however, Sennacherib, resolved to conquer Egypt, again invaded the dominions of Judah, and laid siege to Libnah and Lachish. Thence he sent the RAB-SHAKH, or his "chief cup-bearer," with a large force to demand of the advisers of Hezekiah and the people assembled on the city walls the surrender of Jerusalem.

3. **Destruction of the Assyrian Host.** By order of Hezekiah his message was received in profound silence, and the king sent a messenger to the prophet Isaiah bidding him offer up solemn prayer for his people. The prophet bade him boldly defy his enemy, assuring him that he would be obliged to return to his own land and would there fall by the sword. Meanwhile the ambassadors of the Assyrian king, failing to terrify Jerusalem into a surrender, returned to their master, whom they found at Libnah. While here, he heard that TIRHAKAH, a powerful king

of Ethiopia, was on the march against him, and sent a second embassy to Jerusalem with a letter demanding Hezekiah's instant submission. Repairing to the Temple the Jewish king spread out the letter before the Lord, and was assured by Isaiah that his foe would never be allowed to approach the city or to cast up a bank against it. His words were speedily fulfilled. That very night the Angel of the Lord went forth into the camp of the Assyrians, and when they awoke in the morning, behold 185,000 corpses lay dead upon the ground! On this Sennacherib fled into his own land, where, 17 years after, B. C. 680, as he was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch his god, he was assassinated by his sons ADHAMMELECH and SHAR-ER.

4. **Hezekiah's Illness and Death.** About this time Hezekiah was seized with a dangerous illness, and was warned by Isaiah to *put his house in order for he must die*. In deep distress he thereupon pleaded his case with the Almighty, praying that the prophet's words might not so immediately be fulfilled. His prayer was heard. Isaiah was bidden to inform him that his life would be prolonged 15 years, and as a sign to confirm his words, the shadow on the great dial of his father Ahaz went 10 degrees backwards, and by the application of a plaster of figs his malady was healed. News of his recovery and of the sign attesting it was conveyed into many lands, and various ambassadors with letters and gifts came to his court. Amongst the rest came those of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, to whom Hezekiah displayed with much ostentation the royal treasures. For this he was rebuked by Isaiah, and was told that a day was at hand when these treasures would be carried away into the country of the very king, whose ambassadors had now come to congratulate him. The rest of Hezekiah's reign was spent in peace, and on his death, B. C. 698, he was buried with especial honour in the *chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David*.

5. **Idolatries of Manasseh.** MANASSEH, the son of Hezekiah, succeeded to the throne at the early age of twelve, and through the influence of evil advisers introduced a worse system of idolatry than that which had been practised in the reign of Ahaz. Altars were erected in honour of Baal, and Ashtaroath, and all the host of heaven; human victims were dedicated in the fire to Moloch; the altar of Jehovah was broken down; the ark was displaced, and the sabbath was polluted. Meanwhile the deeds of the king were sternly rebuked by many of the prophets. Of these ISAIAH is now said to have been *sawn asunder*, while others less noted but no less faithful perished in such numbers that the streets of Jerusalem ran with

blood. Before long the captains of ESARHADDON invested Jerusalem, took Manasseh captive, and carried him to Babylon, where he was flung into prison. Here he repented of the awful wickedness he had committed, and humbled himself greatly before the Almighty, who in His infinite mercy hearkened to his prayers. Esarhaddon permitted him to return to Jerusalem, and he set himself to undo as much as he could of the evil he had committed, restoring the worship of Jehovah and destroying the heathen altars. But the effects of his idolatrous example could not be easily effaced, and at his death, he was not laid in the sepulchre of the kings, but in the *garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza*, B. C. 643. AMON his son now succeeded to the throne, but after a reign of two years was assassinated in his own house, and his son JOSIAH was anointed in his stead, B. C. 641.

CHAPTER V.

1. *Reign of Josiah.* Though only eight years old when he began to reign, the new king speedily began to surpass the best of those who had gone before in his zeal for the true God. Commencing a tour, not only through his own dominions, but those which had belonged to the late kingdom of Israel, he visited Jeroboam's chapel at Bethel, and according to the words of the man of God uttered 300 years before, broke down the altar and scattered over it the bones from the neighbouring sepulchres. One of these attracting his attention, he enquired whose it was, and learning that it contained the bones of the old prophet of Bethel and of the man of God from Judah, he ordered that it should be spared and the bones carefully preserved. Returning thence to Jerusalem, he commenced levying contributions for the restoration of the Temple. In the course of the repairs Hilkiah the high-priest found a roll containing the Book of the Law, probably the book of Deuteronomy. Portions of this he read in the ears of the king, who was filled with alarm at the judgments it denounced upon idolatry.

2. *The Prophetess Huldah.* The high-priest thereupon sought the advice of a prophetess named HULDAH, who kept the royal wardrobe. She assured him that the threatened judgments would not be inflicted during the reign of the king himself, whose early piety had found favour with Jehovah, but after he had been gathered to his fathers. Her reply was then announced to the king, and he straightway repaired to the Temple and caused the denunciations of idolatry in the Law to be read in the ears of the people. The effect was very great. The national covenant to worship the true God was solemnly renewed,

the Levitical worship was restored, and the Passover celebrated with imposing grandeur.

3. **Death of Josiah.** But these reforms could not ward off the day of doom. The Assyrian empire at this time had lost much of its former greatness, and NECHO, a powerful king of Egypt, resolved to obtain possession of Carchemish, which commanded the passage of the Euphrates. Josiah determined to oppose his passage through his own dominions, and drew up his forces at Megiddo, where, though he entered into the battle in disguise, he was stricken by the Egyptian archers, and died before he reached Jerusalem, and was committed to the grave amidst the profound regrets of all his people, B.C. 610.

4. **Shallum and Jehoiakim.** His son and successor JEHOAHAZ or SHALLUM, only held the throne for three months, when he was removed by Pharaoh-necho to Egypt, where he died. His brother ELIAKIM was then permitted by the Egyptian monarch to ascend the throne, and assumed the name of JEHOIAKIM. In the fourth year of his reign B.C. 606, NEBUCHADNEZZAR marched against Jerusalem, captured it, placed Jehoiakim in fetters, rifled the Temple, and carried off to Babylon many of the principal Hebrew nobles. On promise, however, of future loyalty, Jehoiakim was permitted to retain the kingly dignity for 3 years longer, when either in a contest with some of his foes, or owing to a rising of his own subjects, he came to a violent end, B.C. 599.

5. **Jeholachin and Zedekiah.** The end of the kingdom of Judah was now close at hand. JEHOIACHIN (called also JECONIAH and CONIAH) the son of the late king, had only reigned 3 months and 10 days, when Nebuchadnezzar's army again appeared before Jerusalem, and he was forced to surrender. After a second pillage of the Temple and its treasures, MATTANIAH was placed by the Babylonian monarch in charge of the exhausted kingdom, and took the name of ZEDEKIAH. Contrary to the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah he was foolish enough to court an alliance with Apries, king of Egypt. This afforded a pretext for another invasion of Judæa, and the Chaldean armies again laid siege to Jerusalem for upwards of sixteen months.

6. **Captivity of Judah.** During this period the miserable inhabitants were reduced to the most fearful straits. Famine prevailed throughout the city; nobles went about searching even dunghills for food; mothers boiled their own children. At length a breach was made in the strong walls, and the enemy effected an entrance into the city. With a handful of troops Zedekiah flew to Jericho, but was pursued, captured, and sent to Riblah, where, by order of Nebuchadnezzar, after his sons had been put to

death before his face, his own eyes were thrust out, and he was removed to Babylon, B.C. 588. The city of David and Solomon now felt the full fury of its enemies' wrath. The Temple, the royal palace, and the houses of the wealthy were set on fire; the walls were broken down; all the remaining vessels of the Sanctuary were carried off; the priests were put to death; and the rest of the people, save a scanty remnant, who were left as vinedressers and husbandmen, were removed to Babylon.

BOOK X.

From the Captivity to the Close of the Canon.

CHAPTER I.

1. **The Jews in Captivity.** Thus far removed from their native land amidst a strange people and strange customs, we might have thought the Jews would have ceased to remain a nation at all. But with them it was not thus to be. Of the ten tribes indeed we hear no more, but the remnant of Judah and Benjamin remained a separate people, increased in numbers, received grants of land, and maintained many of their national rites.

2. **Rise of Daniel.** Amongst the select youths, whom in the third year of Jehoiakim, B.C. 606, Nebuchadnezzar ordered to be transported to Babylon, were four of no ordinary talents, DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL, and AZARIAH. At the royal court under new names, BELTESHAZZAR, SHADRACH, MESHACH, and ABED-NEGO, they attained to high positions, and during the three years of their training abstained from meat and wine, lived on the simplest fare, and yet proved comely and well-favoured.

3. **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.** Before long Nebuchadnezzar dreamt a dream, which exceedingly troubled his spirit. All the wise men were summoned to interpret it, but it had escaped the monarch's memory, and when they failed to recall and explain it he threatened them with instant death. But the royal decree being made known to Daniel, he and his three friends offered up fervent prayer to the Most High, and were privileged to become acquainted with the dream and the interpretation. This wondrous prophetic knowledge filled Nebuchadnezzar with awe, and he advanced Daniel to the highest honours, and bestowed places of much dignity on his three friends.

4. **The Great Image.** As yet, however, the monarch knew not the true God, from whom Daniel derived all his knowledge. His own chief deity was BEL, and it was probably an image 60 cubits high and 6 broad, that he now set up on the plain of Dura, commanding all his subjects, at the sound of music,

to fall down and worship it, unless they would be flung into a *burning fiery furnace*. The day for the great ceremony arrived, and all the officers and governors of the empire prostrated themselves before the image. All, save Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who declared they would rather face the fiery furnace than bow down before the monarch's god. Thereupon Nebuchadnezzar ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated, and the strongest captains in his army to fling these three men into the flames. But his mighty captains fell victims to the fire, while the three martyrs walked unscathed in the midst of the furnace accompanied by a Celestial Being, in whom the monarch discerned a *Son of God*! He himself then drew near, and ordered the three men to come forth, and lo! *not a hair of their head was singed, nor had the smell of fire passed over them!* Convinced that their God was indeed all-powerful, he then ordered all men, far and near, to bow down before Him, and that any who spake a word against Him should be put to death.

CHAPTER II.

1. *Nebuchadnezzar's Fall.* Shortly after these events Nebuchadnezzar dreamt another dream, which none of his wise men could interpret, but Daniel being sent for informed him that a day was near when he would be cast down from his place of power, would be driven from the society of men, and would have his dwelling with the beasts of the field, until "seven times" had passed over him, and he knew that the Lord God indeed ruled among the children of men. But the warning was given in vain. The monarch did not, as Daniel advised him, *break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*, and twelve months afterwards his doom came upon him. He was walking in his glorious palace, and had exclaimed in a moment of pride, *Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the honour of my majesty?* when he became suddenly insane. The mind of a man departed from him, and that of a beast entered in. Casting off his robes, and mingling with the cattle in the fields, he remained exposed to the weather day and night, *till his hair was grown as eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws*. At length, however, his reason returned to him, and with his reason the glory of his kingdom. Confessing the power of God, he resumed the works he had suspended, and died B.C. 561, after a reign of 43 years, bequeathing his throne to his son EVIL-MERODACH, who released JEHOIACHIN, king of Judah, from prison, and advanced him to high honour. Two or three years afterwards

Evil-Merodach was assassinated, and in the course of time, CYRUS THE GREAT having become sovereign of the united Medo-Persian Empire, laid siege to Babylon, B. C. 539.

2. *Belshazzar's Feast.* Regarding little the advance of his foe, Belshazzar, who now ruled at Babylon, made a great feast for his nobles, in the midst of which he commanded all the gold and silver vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem, to be brought forth, and the guests drank from them in honour of their gods. But suddenly a Man's Hand appeared writing mysterious words on the plaister of the palace wall. In great alarm Belshazzar arose and summoned all the wise men of his empire, but they were unable to read the words. At length Daniel was sent for, and he declared that the words contained this message: *MENE, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it; TEKEL, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.* That very night Cyrus having drained the bed of the Euphrates assaulted the city, captured it, and slew Belshazzar, B. C. 538.

3. *Darius the Mede.* Cyrus now entrusted the captured city to a viceroy, known in Scripture as DARIUS THE MEDE, and as a sort of council he set over his realm 120 princes, of whom Daniel was chief. Though stricken in age, the prophet still remained faithful to Jehovah, and the jealous nobles unable to find any matter of accusation against him, persuaded Darius to pass a decree that for 30 days none should offer up any petition to any god or man, save to the monarch himself, on penalty of being flung into a den of lions. Regardless, however, of this decree, Daniel with the windows of his chamber opened towards Jerusalem, prayed three times a day to his God. Thereupon the nobles announced this to the king, and he, sorely against his will, ordered the aged prophet to be flung into the den, the mouth of which was closed, and sealed with the royal signet. But at night the king could not rest, and in the morning he hurried to the den, and there to his great joy having found the prophet safe, he ordered him to be brought forth, and his accusers with their wives and children to be cast into the den in his place, and directed that throughout his empire adoration should be paid to the God of Daniel.

CHAPTER III.

1. *Return of the Jews.* Seventy years had now elapsed since the capture of Jerusalem, B. C. 606—536, when Cyrus, probably through the influence of Daniel, issued a decree permitting the Jews to return to their native land, restored to them

their sacred vessels, and ordered the various governors of his realm to assist them on their way. Few, however, comparatively availed themselves of this permission, and only 42,360 attended by 7,337 servants, under ZERUBBABEL, the grandson of Jehoiachin, and accompanied by the high-priest JESHUA, set out for their native land.

2. **The Dedication of the Second Temple.** The first care of the restored captives was to rebuild the Temple, and in the second year after their return the foundations were laid. But the people of Samaria being refused permission to assist in the work, began to exhaust every artifice to prevent its completion, and when other means failed, sent an embassy to the Persian Court, and prevented any further progress being made during the reign of Cyrus, and of his successors Cambyses and Smerdis, B.C. 525—521. Afterwards, however, the Jews determined to make a fresh effort, and in the eighth year of Darius, or B.C. 516, celebrated the dedication with sacrifices and great rejoicings.

3. **Mordecai and Esther.** During the rest of the reign of Darius, the Jews enjoyed profound peace, but in the year B.C. 485 AHASUERUS, the Xerxes of profane history, ascended the Persian throne. After reigning three years, he made a feast for all his nobles at Susa, and ordered Vashti his queen to grace the banquet with her presence. This she declined to do, which so enraged her lord; that he ordered a general levy of beautiful virgins, from whom to select a new queen. At this time there lived at Susa a Jew named MORDECAI, of the tribe of Benjamin. Having no child of his own he had adopted his cousin HADASSAH or ESTHER, a beautiful orphan, who was now brought into the royal palace, and found such favour with the king that he ordered the crown to be placed upon her head. Mordecai too was advanced to high honour, and having discovered a plot of the eunuchs against the monarch's life, a record of his services was entered in the royal chronicles.

4. **Haman's Plot.** Mordecai, however, had a rival in the person of Haman, an Agagite, or descendant of the ancient Amalekite kings. Finding himself treated with the utmost reverence by all but Mordecai, and discovering Mordecai's lineage, Haman persuaded his master to issue a decree for the destruction of all the Jewish exiles throughout the Persian dominions. Mordecai communicated these designs to Esther, and entreated her to intercede with the king. Thereupon Esther, arrayed in her royal apparel, presented herself before the king, and invited him with Haman to a banquet of wine. Overjoyed

as he was at this mark of favour, Haman declared to his relatives that it availed him nothing, so long as his rival Mordecai retained his place at the king's gate. They therefore advised that a gallows 50 cubits high should be erected, and that he should request the king's permission to hang Mordecai thereon.

5. **Haman's Fall.** The very night, however, before Haman came to prefer his request, the monarch, unable to sleep, had caused the chronicles to be read in his hearing, and now for the first time ascertained that no reward had been bestowed upon Mordecai for revealing the plot against his own life. When therefore Haman entered, he was asked, *What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?* Thinking that none but himself could be intended, the favourite suggested that clad in royal robes he should be conducted by one of the nobles through the streets of Susa. On this he was commanded to confer all these honours upon his rival, and not daring to disobey, escorted him through the city. Then returning home with a heavy heart, he recounted to his family all that had occurred and hurried to the banquet. There at the request of the king Esther revealed the conspiracy against her nation, and Haman at the king's command was hanged upon the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. In memory of this signal deliverance, the Jews still celebrate on the 14th and 15th of the month Adar the Feast of PURIM or *Lots*, so called because Haman resorted to the augury of lots to discover an auspicious day for his cruel designs.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Reforms of Ezra.** In the sixth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C. 458, a fresh band of exiles set out for Jerusalem, headed by Ezra, a descendant of the high-priest Hilkiah. On reaching the Holy City he was pained to find much to blame in the conduct of his countrymen. Forgetful of the law of Moses, they had in many instances intermarried with heathen nations. These abuses Ezra strove to correct, and not without success.

2. **Request of Nehemiah.** Though, however, the Persian monarchs had been willing to permit the re-building of the Temple, they had forbidden the restoration of the city of Jerusalem, which still lay exposed and defenceless. In the 20th year, therefore, of Artaxerxes, B.C. 444, an embassy arrived at the Persian court, and laid before Nehemiah, the chief of the regal cup-bearers, an account of its sad condition. In reply to his enquiries why he was so sorrowful, Nehemiah informed the king of all he had heard, and requested permission to go to Judæa,

and rebuild the city of his fathers. Artaxerxes consented, appointed him governor of Judæa, and ordered the rulers of the various provinces through which he passed, to afford him every assistance.

3. **Rebuilding of Jerusalem.** Thus encouraged, Nehemiah set out, and speedily proposed the rebuilding of the city walls. His project met with general approval, and the work was urged on with energy. His arrival, however, soon reached the ears of the Samaritans, and they exhausted every artifice to defeat his designs. But Nehemiah directed that while one half of the people wrought at the work, the others should stand by armed and ready to defend them, and that the workmen should hold in one hand a weapon and in the other their tools. Thus by dint of incredible exertions, within the brief space of 52 days Jerusalem was again enclosed, the walls were rebuilt, and the ancient towers set up.

4. **Reforms of Nehemiah.** Having thus provided for the defence of the city, Nehemiah set himself with equal zeal to correct various abuses, and especially rebuked the nobles for the excessive rate of usury with which they ground down their poorer brethren. He next persuaded the people to agree solemnly to serve the Lord, to keep the sabbaths and other holy days, to abstain from intermarrying with heathens, and to contribute each man one-third of a shekel towards the support of the Temple service. Having with the aid of Ezra effected these reforms he returned to the Persian court, B.C. 432. During his absence, however, the old abuses began to creep in afresh. Informed of this, he obtained permission to revisit Judæa, and returning after an absence of about 9 years found that Eliashib the high-priest had permitted Tobiah the Ammonite to occupy a large chamber in the Temple. Thereupon he insisted on the expulsion of the intruder, restored the holy vessels which had been removed to make room for him, and appointed a Levitical guard to see to their safe custody. He next bent all his energies to the prevention of traffic on the Sabbath, and the celebration of mixed marriages alike among the higher and lower orders of the people, and even deposed the high-priest Eliashib for allowing his son Joiada to marry a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. Having thus completed his second administration Nehemiah returned, it seems probable, to the Persian court about B.C. 413, with which date closes the History contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

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